Niles volleyball falls in regional semis
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included inside

Niles Star

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Suspect accused of break-in, pulled from river by police

Prosecutors to review incident; man gets medical evaluation

By PAXTON MEDIA STAFF

WATERVLIET TOWNSHIP — An Edwardsburg man was taken for medical evaluation after allegedly breaking into a house and jumping into a river in Watervliet Township.

According to a news release from the Berrien County Sheriff's Office, multiple law enforcement agencies responded to calls at about 10 p.m. Friday about a man who appeared to be in a manic state and had jumped out of a residential window.

Additional 911 calls from the 5200 block of Watervliet Road in Watervliet Township reported the same individual had forced his way into another residence, before fleeing through the yard.

Responding officers found a 43-year-old man from Edwardsburg standing waist-deep in the Paw Paw River near the Watervliet Road Bridge. Police said the individual was highly agitated, striking the water with a stick and repeatedly shouting for help.

Despite officers' verbal instructions, he was unable to follow any self-rescue directions. He was removed from the water after a Berrien County sheriff's deputy and a Michigan State Police trooper entered the river and took physical control of the subject, securing him to a stretcher.

He was transported to Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital in St. Joseph for medical evaluation and treatment. A police report has been forwarded to the Berrien County Prosecutor's Office for review of potential charges related to the subject's actions prior to entering the river.

Responding agencies included the sheriff's office, Michigan State Police, Medic 1 Ambulance, Watervliet Police Department and the Coloma Township Police Department.

Photo provided

The Berrien County Sheriff's Office and Michigan State Police rescued a 43-year-old Edwardsburg man from the Paw Paw River late Friday evening.

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Brandywine students served veterans food during the annual Veterans Day Breakfast.

Brandywine hosts Veterans Day Breakfast

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — A local school district hosted a meal Tuesday to show its gratitude to local veterans and recognize the sacrifices they have made.

Brandywine Community Schools hosted its third annual Veterans Day breakfast at the Brandywine Athletic Community Center, 1700 Bell Rd.

Students from Brandywine Elementary welcomed veterans into the building with patriotic welcome signs and Merritt Elementary students led the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition to breakfast served by the district's Food Services department, members of the Brandywine High School Band played the Armed Forces Medley and district staff were on hand to speak with and welcome Veterans.

Each table had placemats that were decorated by K-2 students and "Cat Cards," postcards with messages for veterans written on them by Brandywine art and social studies students.

"It's more than just a Veterans Day breakfast. It's a celebration," said Brandywine Superintendent Travis Walker. "We want to celebrate them and recognize them for the sacrifices that they made for us… A big part of this is educating our kids. t's important for them to take part in this and recognize all that our veterans have done for us and the freedoms that we have today. It's more than just a breakfast. It really is a celebration and a recognition of what they've done for us."

'New Buffalo Jane Doe' ID'd as missing Chicago woman

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BERRIEN COUNTY — The Michigan State Police Niles Post, in partnership with the DNA Doe Project, has identified the woman known for decades as "New Buffalo Jane Doe" as 71-year-old Dorothy Glanton of Chicago, Illinois.

Glanton was reported missing after leaving her Chicago home on December 9, 1987. On April 8, 1988, her remains were recovered along the shoreline of Lake Michigan near New Buffalo. Despite extensive investigative efforts at the time, her identity could not be determined.

GLANTON

In 2023, MSP investigators reopened the case and enlisted assistance from the DNA Doe Project, a nonprofit specializing in investigative genetic genealogy. DNA extracted from Glanton's remains was analyzed and uploaded to genealogical databases, allowing researchers to construct a family tree that ultimately led to her identification.

Early assessments in 1988 suggested the unidentified woman was a white female in her 40s or 50s. The genetic genealogy process revealed that Glanton was African American and in her early 70s at the time of her death. Advances in forensic technology and collaboration between agencies were key to resolving this decades-old mystery.

"This identification brings closure to a family that has wondered for nearly four decades what happened to their loved one," said D/Sgt. John Moore, MSP Niles Post and lead detective on the case. "We're grateful for the dedication of all those who worked tirelessly on this case."

The Michigan State Police thanked the following partners for their assistance:

- DNA Doe Project for investigative genetic genealogy research.
- Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine for exhumation and sample collection.
- Astrea Forensics, HudsonAlpha Discovery, and Kevin Lord for DNA processing and analysis.
- New Buffalo Police Department, Illinois State Police, and Chicago and Evanston Police Departments for their collaboration.

NILES

City Council advances marijuana microbusiness ordinance

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Niles City Council advanced an ordinance aiming to provide more clarification for microbusinesses transitioning to retail and grow businesses.

The first reading of the ordinance to amend Ordinance 491 Section 54-534 (a)(1)(a) and revoke the City of Niles Code of Ordinance 513 was read during Monday's meeting.

The motion was moved and seconded to put the ordinance on the table for a second reading at the Nov. 17 council meeting.

The ordinance amendment amends ordinance 491 and revokes ordinance 513 to provide clarification of the Code of Ordinances that pertain to Adult-use Marihuana businesses. According to council documents, for a microbusiness to be eligible to transition to a retail and grow, it must be a licensed microbusiness and must maintain both retail and grow licenses.

Microbusinesses looking to transition must also be held in the same facility and the total number of licensed microbusinesses and retail/provisioning licenses will remain capped at eight in the city.

In other business, council:

Authorized the renewal of the BS&A Software of Bath, Michigan at a cost of $5,183 for the year 2026 and charged the expense to the City Assessor and Fire Department – Building Division, Computer Equipment and Supplies budgets.

Authorized the purchase of one Panasonic ToughPad tablet and accessories from CAS of South Easton, Massachusetts in the amount of $3,690 for use at DART and pay for the expense with Section 5307 FTA/MDOT grant funds.

Approved the Assignment of Ground Lease between Kenneth Kasner and the Kasner Family Trust with an expiration date of December 31, 2030.

Approved, by resolution, renewal of the airport Ground Lease with Adrianna Reeves of 32351 SR 2, New Carlisle, IN for a five-year term expiring December 31, 2030.

Authorized the Police Department to purchase one 2025 Chevrolet PPV Tahoe from Berger Chevrolet of Grand Rapids, Michigan for the MiDeal contract price of $53,575, charging the expense to the police equipment replacement fund, and authorize the transfer of the 2015 Chevrolet Tahoe, last four VIN# 2819 to the Board of Public Works.

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Today's obituaries • Page A3

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Mary Griesinger · Rob Palmiter Jr.

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Comics	B5	Home & Garden	C7	Television	D3

FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7702 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ It's astounding that we have more facts and information at our finger tips in history, yet people are choosing to be willfully ignorant and lazy-brained.

■ Trump not only took a wrecking ball to the white House, he took one to the United States.

■ Let's just wait for the next petition in Niles Township to bring it back on the ballot for the next year. I swear I've voted on this three times already.

■ The Edwardsburg Branch Library building is a beautiful building serving our community.

■ So excited to see the Edwardsburg Library project progressing. I cannot wait for the opening date.

■ Please don't tailgate, especially in these bad winter conditions.

■ The reckoning will soon come when you see your Affordable Care premiums jump by double or triple. No one is talking about how hospitals will be affected by this. By law they need to treat people, even if they do not have insurance.

WEATHER

Saturday: A 20 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 65. Southwest wind around 15 mph becoming west in the afternoon. Winds could gust as high as 30 mph.

Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around 36. Northwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.

Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 46. Northwest wind around 15 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.

Sunday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 30.

Monday: Sunny, with a high near 46.

Dowagiac honors late police K9s

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Photo provided

K9s Tole and Cash pose for a photo with their handler, Dowagiac Deputy Chief Kevin Roman.

DOWAGIAC — The City of Dowagiac recently honored the lives and service of two police K9s who both tragically passed away within days of each other this month.

Mayor Patrick Bakeman presented Dowagiac Public Safety Director Steven Grinnewald with a proclamation of service Monday in honor of K9 Tole and K9 Cash, both of whom passed away earlier this month while in the arms of their handler, Deputy Chief Kevin Roman.

"We've all had dogs and we know what they mean to us," Grinnewald said. "When that dog is your protector and somebody that looks out for you, it's that much tougher. So, as the department uh, we're reeling a little bit right now."

K9 Tole, a retired service dog, passed away on Nov. 1. Tole faithfully served the Dowagiac Police Department from July 2016 until his retirement in November 2022. He held certifications in apprehension, tracking, narcotics, and handler protection.

"K9 Tole enjoyed his retirement after an exceptional career as my first K9 partner," Roman said in a statement released on the police department's facebook page. "He taught me how to be a handler; he taught his younger brother, Cash, how to be my partner & what is acceptable behavior in the house. Your departure was not expected and devastating. I miss and love you so much, Tole."

K9 Cash passed away on Nov. 4 after battling cancer for several months. Cash was a 5-year-old Belgian Malinois in his fourth year of service. He trained alongside K9 Tole and was certified in obedience, tracking, narcotics, and searches. K9 Cash had an impressive career, maintaining a success rate of 89 percent, which is over double the national average.

"K9 Cash is my 'little boy' – he was so affectionate and always in physical contact with me," Roman said. "He was born for tracking humans and he was unbeatable in the streets. He had a work mode that when turned on was terrifying and inspiring. You fought so hard against cancer Cashy; it is not fair a sweetheart like you went through that. I miss and love you so much, Cashy."

Roman said Cash and Tole were always by his side and travelled with him everywhere he went. "They were a large part of my daily routine," he said. "They've been there for entertainment on long boring shifts, comfort after the hard calls, and as trusted partners during dangerous uncertain situations."

Grinnewald said the department has been overwhelmed with support from the community following the loss of Tole and Cash. Roman thanked everyone for their ongoing support.

"I cannot express in words the appreciation and outreach from everyone and how much it means to me," Roman said. "I had no idea until the past few days the profound impact Cash and Tole had during their time here."

LMC ensembles unite for annual Holiday Collage concert

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

BENTON HARBOR — The warmth and spirit of the season will fill the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center Grand Upton Hall when the LMC Visual & Performing Arts Department presents its annual Holiday Collage concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 3.

The College's complete lineup of instrumental and vocal ensembles will come together in song, accompanied by dramatic readings during this festive celebration. The evening features performances by the LMC Concert Choir, LMC Vocal Chamber, and Vox LMC directed by Rebecca Derbas-Selvidge, the LMC Jazz Band directed by Danny Lopez, and holiday readings from theatre students under the instruction of Shalico Sain.

Among the many planned musical pieces are "Joy to the World," "Christmas Memories," the much-loved Vince Guaraldi Trio standard "Christmas Time is Here" written for "A Charlie Brown Christmas," "Carol of the Bells," "It's the Holiday Season," "Take 6 Christmas," the Hanukkah song "S'Vivon," and "Jingle Bells."

"This concert has become a favorite tradition for us. It's a chance for our students and community members to share the joy of the season through music and seasonal readings," stated Dr. Robert Lunn, Department Chair of Visual & Performing Arts.

Tickets are $5 and available at www.TheMendelCenter.com/events. Light refreshments and a cash bar will be available. Proceeds support the LMC Visual & Performing Arts Department.

For more information about the LMC Visual & Performing Arts Department and performances, visit lakemichigancollege.edu/arts, email mmcaffrey@lakemichigancollege.edu, or call 269-927-8876.

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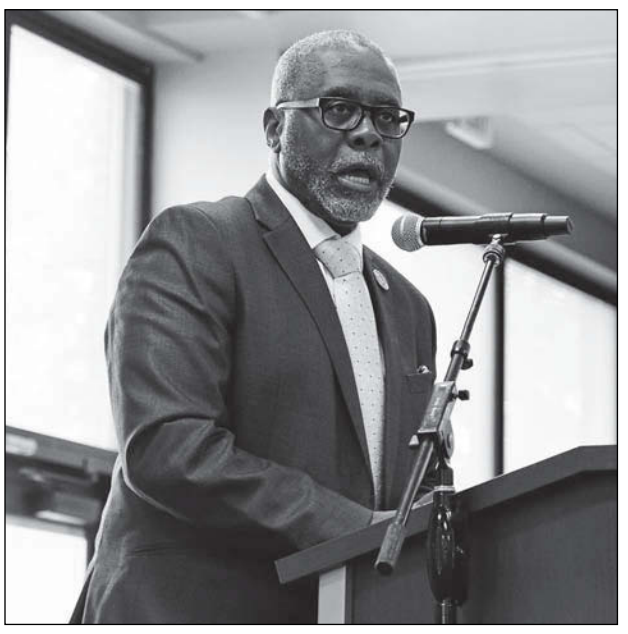


Photo provided

Bristol Community College President Sedgwick Harris.

Harris, 1st Source honored at SMC Founders Day

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Bristol Community College President Dr. Sedgwick L. Harris has diplomas from Northwestern Oklahoma State University (bachelor's), Western Michigan University (master's) and Ferris State University (doctorate).

But only one adorns his office in Fall River, Mass. – his associate degree in communications and media studies from Southwestern Michigan College, earned in 1988-90 when he played basketball for the Roadrunners.

"That is the only degree I display because it was the first," Harris said. "Without it, I would not be here today."

Harris returned to campus to accept the Outstanding Alumni Award Nov. 7 at the second annual Founders Day in Mathews Conference Center East.

A first-generation college student, Harris "had a very challenging start. My roommate didn't show up (at Hamilton Square Apartments), so I stayed at the Skyline Motel. I didn't want to go home a failure. I wanted to set an example of perseverance for my younger brother.

"SMC gave me an opportunity to figure out where I wanted to go and how I was going to get there."

He met his "guardian angel."

"Carol Churchill showed me the way," Harris said. "When I got ready to leave, I asked her, 'What can I do for you?' She said to pay it forward and help the next generation through the door, so that's what I've been doing for the last 28 years at Kellogg, Kaskaskia, Kishwaukee, Northampton and Bristol. The message is the same – helping students push forward to the next level. I've stayed at community colleges, whose students select us."

Churchill introduced Harris "to Coach (James) Judd, who was my man. He taught me how to score wrestling and found me a place to stay."

1st Source Foundation was presented the Distinguished Service Award in gratitude for supporting two major projects, the fieldhouse bearing its name and the 2019 Nursing and Health Services Education Building.

"Through their generosity, we have been able to create exceptional spaces where our students can pursue their educations and continue their extra-curricular passions," said Chief Financial Officer Michelle Kite. "1st Source Foundation stands as a model of community partnership and leadership. They don't just invest in buildings, they invest in people, opportunity and progress."

1st Source's Kevin Murphy said the financial institution has been serving 163 years, including 30 in southwest Michigan.

"We are only as successful as the communities we serve," Murphy said, "and to grow our communities we've got to find good partners. There is no better partner than SMC. We're a community bank with 1,300 colleagues and SMC draws students from the area, provides a world-class education with relevant programs that really change their trajectory. They go back into their communities to build a stronger, more vibrant community to work in and raise their families. You also build leaders through arts and athletics."

The student speaker, sophomore music major Lauren Lovell of Watervliet, sings in SMC choirs and plays clarinet and tenor saxophone.

Recruited by Director of Choral Activities David Carew and Director of Bands Mark Hollandsworth, Lovell auditioned for and received band, choir and theatre scholarships freshman year.

This year, she was awarded the Ruth Sarabyn Memorial Scholarship and the Dale A. and Doris M. Lyons Memorial Scholarship.

"Coming to SMC was one of the best decisions I ever made," Lovell said. "I've grown so much as a musician and met so many people who share the same passion for music.

"I'm involved in Jazz Ensemble, Pep Band, Symphonic Band, Collegiate Chorale, women's ensemble and Choral Scholars," Lovell said.

"While I am a music major, one of the best things about SMC's performing arts program is you don't have to be a major to participate. If you love music, SMC gives you an opportunity to perform and build confidence. The class sizes, supportive professors and welcoming community made my transition from high school so much easier than had I been at a large university."

"Lauren represents all SMC has to offer. Founders Day gives us an opportunity to celebrate how far we've come as an institution" in 61 years, said Development Manager Emily Schrock, who highlighted the Room to Grow campaign.

"It's a day to honor those who laid the foundation for SMC and to reflect on their commitment, which continues to shape who we are today. Because of their vision and because of ongoing support from people like you, SMC stands strong, serving our students, strengthening our community and building a brighter future.

"When students like Lauren have access to the right resources, whether dedicated faculty, modern facilities or financial support, they can fully engage in their passions and reach their highest potential. The campaign is designed to provide that support" with a dedicated wrestling facility and renovating the choir and band rooms.

"It's an investment in our students, our region and our shared future," Schrock said.

"Giving to SMC changes the trajectory of someone's life," Schrock said. "Many students, like Dr. Harris, are the first in their families to attend college. Many juggle work, family and school to make their dreams a reality. Your generosity provides them not only access to education, but with encouragement – proof that their community believes in them."

OBITUARIES

Kevin Dickson

April 3, 1960 – October 2025

In Loving Memory of Kevin L Dickson

It is with heavy hearts and deep sorrow that we share the passing of Kevin L. Dickson, 65, of Sister Lakes, Michigan. Kevin left us in October 2025 at his home in Winter Haven, Florida.

Born on April 3, 1960, Kevin was a proud graduate of Dowagiac High School. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to a successful career in real estate and later to launching businesses in Arizona, including a shuttle/limousine service and Arizona Medical Supply. Later in life, he found tremendous joy with his beloved Tara Bond Stroman as they built their life together in Elkhart, Indiana and Winter Haven, Florida.

To know Kevin was to experience laughter-his sense of humor and infectious laugh brightened every room he entered. He cherished time spent with friends and adored his pets. His enthusiasm for cooking was matched only by his passion for politics and the great outdoors; whether golfing or relaxing on the lake, he embraced every moment. Kevin's encyclopedic knowledge of all things unusual made every conversation an adventure-if you had a question about anything obscure or fascinating, you could count on him for the answer.

Kevin's absence leaves an unfillable void; he will be greatly missed by all who knew him. He is survived by his sister Karen Dickson and nieces Olga Dickson French and Luda Dickson French. He now joins his parents Ken Dickson and Lorene Dickson in eternal rest.

A celebration of Life will be held at a later date to honor Kevin's remarkable journey among us. Memorial contributions can be made in his name to the Sister Lakes Lions Club at 66991 95th Ave., Dowagiac, MI 49047.

We invite you to remember Kevin for the joy he brought into our lives-his laughter will echo our hearts forever.

Mary Jo Griesinger

January 25, 1937 – November 7, 2025

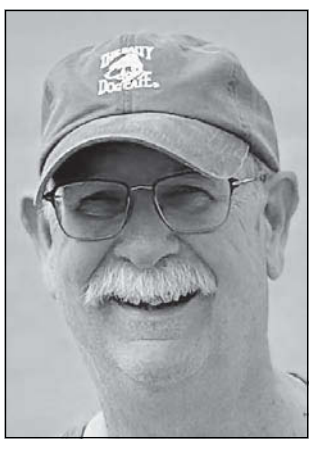
Mary Jo Griesinger, 88, formerly of Niles, Michigan passed away on Friday, November 7, 2025 surrounded by her family in New Carlisle, Indiana. She was born on January 25, 1937 in Terre Haute, Indiana to the late John Manhart and Marie (Hurst) Leahy. On January 7, 1956 she married Ronald Leo Griesinger who preceded her in death on September 17, 2022.

Mary Jo was also preceded in death by one daughter, Jean Marie Griesinger, one still born daughter, Theresa Griesinger, one son-in-law, Rick Dyer, four siblings, Bob Manhart, Tom Leahy, Anne Czarneckie, Kate Leahy and one sister-in-law, Janet Ivacic who preceded her in death on the same day. She is survived by one daughter, Kathleen Dyer of New Carlisle, Indiana, two sons, Ron (Cheri) Griesinger of St. Joseph, Michigan and John (Cathy) Griesinger of Niles, Michigan, nine grandchildren; Michael (Stephanie) Griesinger, Karen (Jason) Keesler, Tom Griesinger, Nicholas (Amber) Perkins, Amy (Brandon) Krisher, Lisa (Alan) Nichols, Mikayla (Adam) Golden, Justin (Lauren) Dyer, Matthew (Sarai) Griesinger and Ryan Griesinger, eighteen great-grandchildren, one sister, Anna Mary Crum of LaPorte, Indiana, one brother, Jim (Ina Rae) Manhart of Valparaiso, Indiana, one step sister, Pat Boyer of Mishawaka, Indiana, four sisters-in-law, Carol Griesinger of Mishawaka, Indiana, Jeanne (Len) Merrick of Carmel Indiana, Judy (Clem) Krugh of South Bend, Indiana, Marilyn Leahy of Union Mills, Indiana, lifelong friends, Bill and Donna Rhoads and the Crum family.

Mary Jo was an executive secretary at AM General for twenty-five years. Her hobbies and interests included time with family and friends, bowling, mahjong, cards, and trivia games. A visitation will be held on Saturday, November 15, 2025 from 11:00 am EST until 1:00 pm EST at the New Carlisle Wesleyan Church, 32645 Early Rd, New Carlisle, IN. A funeral service will be held at 1:00 pm EST in the church. Memorial contributions may be made in Mary Jo's honor to The New Carlisle Wesleyan Church or Dune's Hospice.

Robert Palmiter Jr.

July 7, 1952 – November 9, 2025



Robert Jay Palmiter Jr., 73, of Niles, died suddenly, Sunday, November 9, 2025. His life began July 7, 1952 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the second of three children born to Robert and Fanchion Palmiter.

He married Vicky Verspelt, September 30, 1978 in Mishawaka. Bob graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1976. He was an architect for Genesis Architects for over thirty years. Bob built their dream home on Barron Lake in 1991. It was there that many family memories were made, especially holidays, like the fourth of July and Thanksgiving. Bob was an avid Notre Dame fan, following them in multiple sports.

Most importantly, Bob loved his family, especially his grandchildren, who brought great joy to his life. Bob will be greatly missed by family and friends. He is survived by his wife, Vicky Palmiter of Niles; two sons, Rob (Autumn) Palmiter of Freeport, Pennsylvania, Kevin (Ashleigh) Palmiter of Grand Rapids Michigan; three grandchildren, Charlotte, Andrew and Chelsea Palmiter; one sister, Fran Palmiter of Goshen and one brother, Lloyd Palmiter of Chicago. He was preceded in death by his parents.

The family will observe a private remembrance. The family prefers contributions in memory of Bob be made to the charity of the donor's choice. Arrangements have been entrusted to Halbritter Wickens Funeral Services, Niles. Please share a memory or a message online: halbritterwickens.com.

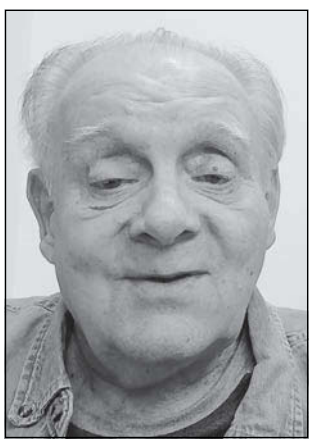
Janet Barnett

January 12, 1946 – November 7, 2025

Janet Gayle Barnett, 79, of Vandalia, died peacefully Friday, November 7, 2025 in the comfort of her family's presence. Her life began January 12, 1946 in Dowagiac, Michigan one of four children born to Richard and Betty Cox. She married Brad Barnett October 8, 1966 in Cassopolis, Michigan. Janet cherished her family. She was a mischievous person and enjoyed the outdoors. Having grown up on a farm, she would gladly do chores or spend time with her father outside. She had a horse and even tried to take it into the house. Janet was a bus driver for Marcellus Public Schools for twenty-four years. She was very proud of the children she drove over the years. She enjoyed quilting and gardening. She always had a love for animals. There were always dogs or cats around and she even raised a racoon. She enjoyed reading, especially pioneer stories. Janet never met a stranger. She was a social, personable, and dependable friend. Janet will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her husband of fifty-nine years, Brad Barnett of Vandalia; daughter, Kim (Eric) Hoopes of Jones; sons, Chris Barnett of Vandalia, Gary (Rhonda) Barnett of Vandalia; nine grandchildren, Spencer, Stacey, Kristen, Ambrose, Sky, Lane, Hunter, Ellie, Leah; two great grandchildren, Malachi, Rowan; sister, Mary Nelson of Battle Creek; and a host of nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brothers, Tom Cox, and Mike Cox. Family and friends will gather Thursday, November 13, 2025 from 11:00 am until time of service at 12:30 pm in Wakelee Bible Church, 15921 Dutch Settlement Street, Marcellus. Mrs. Barnett will be laid to rest in Little Fish Lake Cemetery. The family prefers contributions in memory of Janet be made to Wakelee Bible Church, Post Office Box 35, Marcellus, Michigan 49067. Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Dan Searfoss

March 7, 1947 – November 11, 2025



Daniel Eugene Searfoss was born in South Bend, Indiana on March 7, 1947 to Mr and Mrs Robert Searfoss.

Dan graduated from Niles High School in 1965, enlisted in the Army one year in the States and one year in Vietnam. After coming home he went to work at Simplicity Pattern Company where he met his lifelong wife Loretta. They have two children Heather and Chris.

He went from Simplicity to work for Paul Crouch realty and from there to Michiana Box and Crate as their bookkeeper. Dan and his family moved to Deltona, Florida where he found a job across from the ocean and retired. Dan is survived by his wife and both children.

He passed away peacefully at home on November 11, 2025 with his family.

Obituary policy

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Man gets prison time for break-in

Indiana man sentenced for breaking into High Profile dispensary in Buchanan

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications

KABELIS

WILLIAMS

NILES — An Indiana man is going to prison after being convicted of breaking into a Buchanan marijuana dispensary last year.

Joseph Dustin Kabelis, 27, of Indiana, pleaded guilty to breaking and entering a building with intent to commit larceny, third degree fleeing and eluding police and unlawful driving away of an automobile and was sentenced to three concurrent prison terms Monday in Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles courthouse.

Kabelis received a sentence of 34 months to 10 years in prison for breaking and entering, a sentence of 18 months to five years in prison for fleeing and eluding police and a sentence of 34 months to five years in prison for unlawful driving away of an automobile.

Charges of malicious destruction of a building $1,000 to $20,000, resisting and obstructing police, reckless driving and failure to stop after a collision were dismissed.

The incident occurred Nov. 28, 2024 in Buchanan. Assistant Prosecutor Myrene Koch reported that Kabelis crashed into a home on Red Bud Trail and then broke into the High Profile Cannabis dispensary on Front Street.

In another sentencing, a man who sold drugs to an undercover officer this summer was sentenced to prison.

Joseph Dean Williams, 33, pleaded guilty to second offense delivery/manufacture of methamphetamine and possession of a weapon by a prohibited person and was sentenced to concurrent prison terms of 60 months to 20 years and 18 months to five years in prison.

He has credit for 75 days served and had his weapon forfeited.

The incident occurred Aug. 27 at a location in Niles Township when he sold meth to an undercover police officer.

Koch reported that he has a past record of four felony and eight misdemeanor convictions.

OPINION

WRITE US: Here's how to submit a letter to the editor:
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How the Plymouth Pilgrims took over Thanksgiving

By THOMAS TWEED
University of Notre Dame (The Conversation)

Nine in 10 Americans gather around a table to share food on Thanksgiving. At this polarizing moment, anything that promises to bring Americans together warrants our attention.

But as a historian of religion, I feel obliged to recount how popular interpretations of Thanksgiving also have pulled us apart.

Communal rituals of giving thanks have a longer history in North America, and it was only around the turn of the 20th century that most people in the U.S. came to associate Thanksgiving with Plymouth "Pilgrims" and generic "Indians" sharing a historic meal.

The emphasis on the Pilgrims' 1620 landing and 1621 feast erased a great deal of religious history and narrowed conceptions of who belongs in America – at times excluding groups such as Native Americans, Catholics and Jews.

Farming faiths and harvest festivals

The usual Thanksgiving depiction overlooks Indigenous rituals that give thanks, including harvest festivals.

The Wampanoag, who shared food with the Pilgrims in 1621, continue to celebrate the cranberry harvest, and similar feasts were held long before Columbus sailed and Pilgrims landed.

As I note in my 2025 book, "Religion in the Lands That Became America," for instance, celebrants gathered for a communal feast in the late 11th century in the 50-acre plaza of Cahokia. That Native city, across the river from present-day St. Louis, was the largest population center north of Mexico before the American Revolution.

Cahokians and their neighbors came in late summer or early autumn to give deities thanks, smoke ritual tobacco and eat special food – not corn, their dietary staple, but symbolically significant animals such as white swans and white-tailed deer. So, those Cahokians attended a thanks-giving feast five centuries before the Pilgrims' harvest-time meal.

'Days of Thanksgiving'

The usual depiction also de-emphasizes the tradition of officials announcing special "Days of Thanksgiving," a practice familiar to the Pilgrims and their descendants.

The Pilgrims, who settled in what is now Plymouth, Massachusetts, were separatist Puritans who had denounced the Catholic elements that remained in the Protestant Church of England. They first sought to form their own "purified" church and community in Holland. After about 12 years, many of them moved again, crossing the Atlantic in 1620. The Pilgrims' colony southeast of Boston was gradually absorbed into Massachusetts Bay Colony, founded in 1630 by a larger group of Puritans who did not split from England's official church.

As historians have noted, Puritan ministers in Massachusetts' state-sanctioned Congregational Church didn't just speak on Sundays. Now and then they also gave special thanksgiving sermons, which expressed gratitude for what the community considered divine interventions, from military victory to epidemic relief.

The practice continued and spread. During the American Revolution, for instance, the Continental Congress declared a Day of Thanksgiving to commemorate the victory at Saratoga in 1777. President James Madison announced Days of Thanksgiving during the War of 1812. Leaders of the United States and the Confederate states did the same during the Civil War.

This tradition influenced Americans such as Sarah Hale, who called for a national Thanksgiving holiday. A magazine editor and poet best known for "Mary Had a Little Lamb," she successfully pitched the idea to Abraham Lincoln in 1863.

Harvest feast of 1621

Many Americans' view of "The First Thanksgiving" resembles the scene depicted in a Jean Ferris painting by that name. Finished around 1915, it is similar to another popular image painted around the same time, Jennie Augusta Brownscombe's "The First Thanksgiving at Plymouth."

Both images distort the historical context and misrepresent Indigenous attendees from the nearby Wampanoag Confederacy. The Native leaders wear headdresses from Plains tribes, and there are too few Indigenous attendees.

Only one eyewitness account survives: a 1621 letter from the Pilgrim Edward Winslow. He reported that the Wampanoag's leader, Massasoit, brought 90 men. That means, some historians suggest, the shared meal was as much a diplomatic event marking an alliance as an agricultural feast celebrating a harvest.

Ferris' painting also implies that the English provided the food. Plymouth residents brought "fowl," as Winslow recalled – probably wild turkey – but the Wampanoag added five killed deer. Even the harvest of "Indian corn" depended on Native aid. Tisquantum or Squanto, the lone survivor of the village that the Pilgrims called Plymouth, had offered lifesaving advice about planting as well as diplomacy.

The image's cheerful scene also obscures how death had destabilized the area. The Pilgrims lost almost half their group to famine or exposure that first winter. After earlier European contact, however, even larger numbers of the Wampanoag had died in a regional epidemic that raged between 1616-1619. That's why the Pilgrims found Squanto's village abandoned, and why both communities were open to the alliance he brokered.

Pilgrims' primacy

The Pilgrims were latecomers to the Thanksgiving table. Lincoln's 1863 proclamation, published in Harper's Monthly, mentioned "the blessing of fruitful fields," but not the Pilgrims. Nor were Pilgrims depicted in the magazine's illustrated follow-up. The page showed town and country, as well as emancipated slaves, celebrating the feast day by praying at "the Union altar." For years before and after the proclamation, in fact, many Southerners resisted Thanksgiving, which they saw as a Northern, abolitionist holiday.

The Pilgrims' absence makes sense, since they were not the first Europeans to land on North America's eastern coast – or to give thanks there. Spanish Catholics had founded St. Augustine in 1565. According to an eyewitness account, the Spanish leader asked a priest to celebrate Mass on Sept. 8, 1565, which Native Americans attended, and "ordered that the Indians be fed."

Two decades later, an English group had tried and failed to establish a colony on Roanoke Island, North Carolina – including a Jewish engineer. The English had more success when they settled Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607. A commander leading a new group to Virginia was instructed to mark "a day of Thanksgiving to Almighty God" in 1619, two years before the Plymouth meal.

But over the years, Plymouth's Pilgrims still moved slowly toward the center of the national holiday – and America's founding narrative.

In 1769, Plymouth residents promoted their town by organizing a "Forefathers' Day." In 1820 the Protestant politician Daniel Webster gave a speech commemorating the bicentennial of the landing at Plymouth Rock and praising the Pilgrims' arrival as "the first footsteps of civilized man" in the wilderness. Then in an 1841 volume, "Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers," a Boston minister reprinted the 1621 eyewitness account and described the shared harvest meal as "the first Thanksgiving."

Rising immigration

Between 1880 and 1920, the Pilgrims emerged as the central characters in national narratives about both Thanksgiving Day and America's origin. It was no coincidence that these years were the peak of immigration to the U.S., and many Americans saw the new immigrants as inferior to those who had landed at Plymouth Rock.

Irish Catholics already had a presence in Boston when the "Pilgrim Fathers" volume appeared in 1841, and more came after the Irish potato famine later that decade. Boston's foreign-born population increased further as poverty and politics pushed Italian Catholics and Russian Jews to seek a better life in America.

The same was happening in many northern cities, and some Protestants were alarmed. In an 1885 bestseller called "Our Country," a Congregational Church minister warned that "the glory is departing from many a New England village, because men, alien in blood, in religion, and in civilization, are taking possession of homes in which were once reared the descendants of the Pilgrims."

During the 300th anniversary of the Pilgrims' landing and harvest meal, celebrated in 1920 and 1921, the federal government issued commemorative stampsand coins. Officials staged pageants, and politicians gave speeches. About 30,000 people gathered in Plymouth, for instance, to hear President Warren Harding and Vice President Calvin Coolidge praise the "Pilgrim Spirit."

Soon nativist worries about the newcomers, especially Catholics and Jews, led Coolidge to sign the Immigration Act of 1924, which would largely close America's borders for four decades.

Americans kept telling the Pilgrim story after U.S. immigration policy became more welcoming in 1965, and many will tell it again next year as we celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary. Understood in its full context, it's a story worth telling. But we might use caution since, as history reminds us, stories about the country's spiritual past can either bring us together or pull us apart.

Thomas Tweed is professor emeritus of American Studies and History at the University of Notre Dame. The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts. This article is republished under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article at https://theconversation.com.

SMC musicians 'Rake a Difference' for United Way

By JOHN EBY
Southwestern Michigan College

DOWAGIAC — Six Southwestern Michigan College musicians found themselves back in marching band Nov. 13 volunteering for United Way of Southwest Michigan's 15th annual Rake a Difference.

The event unfolds across Cass, Berrien and Van Buren counties.

On a huge, sloping LaGrange Township lawn, where stubborn snow cowered in the shade, six band members wielding rakes marched back and forth, uphill and down, until 43 big Home Depot bags overflowed.

Combined with a previous stop on the other side of Cassopolis, where they stuffed another 33 bags, the instrumentalists topped off a total of 76 – same as the number of trombones in "The Music Man."

But on this sunny Thursday, SMC sent but two trombonists, Justin Hemenway of Decatur and Hunter Hurley of Marcellus, joined by Adalyne Wiley (flute, Berrien Springs), Aalina Sanders (flute, Bridgman), Brayden Rice (trumpet, Cassopolis) and Lauren Lovell (clarinet, tenor saxophone, Watervliet).

Director of Bands Mark Hollandsworth led the way as usual, but tossed his baton aside in favor of a gas-powered, Craftsman backpack leaf blower that made it possible to conquer the formidable hillside.

"I appreciate this so much," the grateful homeowner said as they presented her a gift bag from United Way and invited her to their holiday concert Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.

As Hollandsworth told his troops in the band room before departing campus, "We have a job to do, but the reward is when we get done, we get a chance to talk with the seniors we're serving. To me, that's the best part of the day.

"It's important that we give back when we can, and this is an easy way to do it. They might not have family close by. We did one last year and her kids lived out of state, so there was no one to help with this kind of thing.

"As you get older and your friends start passing and your family spreads out, it can be a little isolating, so having someone come over to their house and talk to them is a big deal."

SMC was also represented in Dowagiac where a staff team raked on James and E. Wayne streets in the neighborhood of Justus Gage Elementary School.

The town team consisted of Director of Campus Life Branden Pompey, Vice President for the Student Experience Dr. Katie Hannah, First Year Experience Manager Courtney Hemenway, CRM Administrator and Communications Process Manager Rachel Breden, Manager of Development Emily Schrock and Administrative Assistant/Safety Coordinator for Buildings and Grounds Andrea Swartz.

Photos provided

Southwestern Michigan College musicians volunteered for United Way of Southwest Michigan's 15th annual Rake a Difference Thursday.

"We have a job to do, but the reward is when we get done, we get a chance to talk with the seniors we're serving. To me, that's the best part of the day."

MARK HOLLANDSWORTH
Director of bands at Southwestern Michigan College

Rake a Difference volunteers come together to support senior citizens who may struggle to maintain their yards.

The initiative not only helps keep neighborhoods clean and safe but fosters connections between volunteers and the seniors they assist.

"Rake a Difference is simply a big success because the teams of volunteers throughout each community make it happen," said Debbie Ramirez, director of impact and volunteer engagement at United Way of Southwest Michigan. "It amazes me each year how teams find a way to make this a fun team-building event while also helping community members."

Rake a Difference was made possible with support from the AEP Foundation, Gast Manufacturing, French Paper Co., Midwest Energy and Communications, Invenergy, Whirlpool Corp., Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren, Silver Beach Pizza, BluCat Consulting, Comcast NBCUniversal, Hungerford CPAs, Niles Precision Co. and Vail Rubber Works.

In 2024, more than 1,200 volunteers stepped up to help across the three- county area to impact more than 350 seniors.

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Edwardsburg man gets jail, probation for cocaine possession

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications

CASSOPOLIS — A 20-year-old Edwardsburg man caught with cocaine and marijuana at a May traffic stop outside of Niles will get the chance to keep the charge off his record if he successfully completes a jail and probation sentence.

The man pleaded guilty Friday in Cass County Circuit Court to delivery/manufacture of cocaine less than 50 grams and was sentenced under the Holmes Youthful Training Act to two years probation, 270 days jail with credit for three days served and $2,328 in fines and costs. He was ordered to get his high school diploma or GED before the end of his probation.

If successful on probation, the felony charge will not be entered on his record. As part of the plea deal in this case, charges of fleeing police, carrying a concealed weapon and possession of a firearm in the commission of a felony were dismissed. The felony fire - arm charge alone would have carried a mandatory two-year prison term.

The incident occurred May 27 on Fir Road in Milton Township. The Edwardsburg man ran a stop sign and then attempted to fl ee police. He ran off the road, came back on the road and was stopped by police for having an expired registration. A search of the car found marijuana, cocaine and a scale as well as a loaded handgun.

Defense attorney Robert Drake noted that the Edwardsburg man has comported himself with dignity during the proceedings.

"The fact that he is here today knowing he's going to jail says something about his character," Drake said. "He's not a bad guy, he's a young man. He even told the officer where more drugs were in the car."

Drake said that the man's previous record as a juvenile involved an incident where he and older youth broke into a high school concession stand where the only thing he took was candy.

"He took the candy and ate them on the way home, he was found by tracing the candy wrappers," he said.

"You're 20 years old, you dropped out of school in the 11th grade and this is your first criminal adult conviction," said Cass County Circuit Court Judge Mark Herman. "You need to realize that when you mix drugs and guns, time behind bars will be the usual outcome. That's if the drug dealing doesn't get you first. people are shot and killed over drug deals even here in Cass County."

"You're going nowhere with drug dealing except six feet under out the back door here to jail or prison," the judge added. "You're using and dealing drugs, you're unemployed, you have no high school diploma. That's not a recipe for success. If you don't get yourself squared around, you will spend a lot of holidays and birthdays behind bars."

A South Bend man already serving a sentence in Berrien County for weapons and stolen property convictions was sentenced Friday for possession of methamphetamine.

Samuel Michael Friant, 28, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 10 months in jail with credit for 32 days served and $1,548 in fines and costs. He can serve the jail sentence in any penal institution as he faces charges in other jurisdictions.

The incident occurred Dec. 15, 2024 when a car he was a passenger in was stopped by Michigan State Police in Jefferson Township. A search of the vehicle found meth in the car. He was arrested a few weeks later on the Berrien County charges.

FRIANT

LITTERAL

WOOD

"You're 28 years old, you've been using meth for over 10 years and you've been unemployed since last year," Judge Herman said. "People always say they want help but then they re-offend and ask again for help. It's a two way street, you ask for help, do what you want and then ask for help again. You can't continually come back and say you need help."

"If you don't address your addictions, this is going to be your life," the judge added. "You will be sitting in an orange jumpsuit in front of a judge and asking for help."

In other sentencings:

Tara Littereal, 42, of Shipshewana, Ind., pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for 108 days served and $1,548 in fines and costs. The incident occurred June 10 near Three Rivers.

Jennifer Lynn Wood, 47, of Leach Road near Dowagiac, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and larceny $200 to $1,000 and was sentenced to two years probation, credit for 86 days served, $2,268 in fines and costs and $3,926.20 restitution. The incident occurred Sept. 13, 2024 outside of Dowagiac when she and others stole a vehicle.

GOP lawmakers ask Department of Justice to oversee Michigan's 2026 elections

By CRAIG MAUGER
The Detroit News (TNS)

LANSING — A group of 22 Michigan Republican lawmakers has asked President Donald Trump's U.S. Department of Justice to deploy monitors to vote-counting facilities and to provide general oversight for the state's upcoming elections in 2026.

In a letter sent Thursday to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, the GOP legislators said their concerns centered on the fact that Democratic Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, the state's chief election official, will help manage the August and November 2026 elections while "simultaneously appearing on the ballot as a candidate for governor."

"This creates an inherent and unavoidable conflict of interest, as Secretary Benson will be administering an election in which she has a direct personal stake in the outcome," the Republican lawmakers wrote. "Such a situation risks compromising the impartiality required for fair election oversight and demands external federal scrutiny to maintain public trust."

However, secretaries of state, from both parties, have regularly supervised elections in which they were on the ballot as candidates in the past.

The unusual request for federal intervention came ahead of what will be a pivotal election in the battleground state. Next year, voters in Michigan will select a new governor, a new secretary of state, a new attorney general and a new U.S. senator. Likewise, every seat in the state Legislature will be up for grabs.

Angela Benander, spokeswoman for Benson, a second-term secretary of state, said the Republican lawmakers were using "dangerous, false rhetoric to encourage President Trump to illegally interfere in our state's ability to hold fair and free elections."

"They are aligning with the administration's ongoing efforts to manufacture crises in order to justify ongoing federal overreach that puts our citizens' privacy, safety and freedoms in danger," Benander said in a statement. "This department and Secretary Benson will continue to stand up to these efforts to silence the voices and trample the rights of all Michiganders."

Alex Wong / Getty Images / TNS

Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson testifies during a hearing on Capitol Hill on March 12, 2024, in Washington, D.C. In a letter sent Nov. 13 to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, a group of GOP legislators expressed their concerns on the fact that Benson will help manage the August and November 2026 elections while "simultaneously appearing on the ballot as a candidate for governor."

Other Democrats and some election officials also slammed the Republicans' letter. They noted that Michigan's elections are conducted on the ground by hundreds of clerks across the state and results are certified by bipartisan canvassing boards.

Barb Byrum, the clerk for Ingham County and a Democratic candidate for secretary of state, labeled the request "a partisan attack against a political opponent rather than a genuine concern for the integrity of our elections."

Likewise, Chris Thomas, Michigan's former longtime elections director who worked under both Republicans and Democrats, said the type of widespread federal oversight the GOP lawmakers were seeking would be unprecedented in Michigan. If there was a real concern, a neutral organization should provide the oversight, Thomas said.

"The current Department of Justice is just really a political operation," Thomas said.

Senate Minority Leader Aric Nesbitt, a Republican who's also a candidate for governor, led the letter to Bondi on Thursday.

The letter noted the U.S. Department of Justice sued Benson in September, saying her office had failed to fulfill a demand for information on the state's registered voter list.

"We urge the DOJ to deploy personnel to observe polling places, absentee ballot processing, voter registration activities and central count facilities across Michigan," the GOP lawmakers wrote. "Such oversight will help ensure adherence to federal laws, prevent irregularities and restore faith in our democratic processes."

Local election officials, not Benson, run polling places, absentee ballot processing facilities and vote counting facilities in Michigan.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Justice declined to comment on the lawmakers' request. However, the department said it was going to monitor polling sites in New Jersey and California for the Nov. 4, 2025, general election.

Among the lawmakers who signed onto the Michigan letter were Republican Sen. Ruth Johnson, R-Holly, a former secretary of state, GOP Rep. Rachelle Smit, R-Martin, chairwoman of the House Election Integrity Committee, and Sen. Jim Runestad, chairman of the Michigan Republican Party.

Johnson was the secretary of state from 2011 through 2018. She successfully ran for the state Senate in the 2018 election while she was secretary of state.

Similarly, Republican Candice Miller was secretary of state from 1995 through 2002. Miller successfully ran for the U.S. House in 2002.

Democrat Richard Austin was secretary of state from 1971 through 1994. In 1976, he ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate.

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Niles students recognized for perfect M-STEP scores

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — More than a dozen Niles Community Schools students were recognized Monday, Nov. 3 for achieving perfection in the classroom.

The district's board of education honored 13 students who earned perfect scores on Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, or M-STEP, in English Language Arts, Math or both. The M-STEP is an assessment designed to gauge how well students are mastering state standards in math, English, science and social studies. Each student was presented with a plaque marking their achievement.

"On behalf of the board, I also just want to congratulate all of the kiddos," said Board President Kyle Zelmer. "It is definitely a testament to your hard work and to our teachers."

The rare feat was accomplished by nine Eastside Elementary Students: Samuel Rust, Zander Hall, Hudson Sapmaz, Jacob Zietlow, Emilia Holt, Hunter Schutze, Owen Smith, Savannah Kennedy and Elizabeth Stevenson; three Howard-Ellis students: Mason Scott, Jeremy Whitkey and Josephine Saylor; and one Ring Lardner Middle School student in Nolan Gruelich.

"A lot of times we celebrate the extracurriculars but this time we really wanted to recognize our academics," said NCS Superintendent Dr. Adam Burtsfield. "These students really put in the work and showed what it means to be a Niles Viking in the classroom."

Brandywine gets 'clean' audit

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader Publications Contributor

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — The Brandywine school district is in good financial health, School Board members learned at their meeting Monday.

In addition to receiving the results of the annual audit, board members voted to give district employees a retention bonus and received a grant for the district's Career Technical Education program.

Superintendent Travis Walker reported that the audit conducted by the Kruggel Lawton accounting firm found no findings with the district receiving a clean, unmodified opinion. Auditors conducted the audit of the district's finances for the 2024-25 fiscal year that ended June 30.

Walker said the district's general fund ended up in better shape than anticipated when the fiscal year ended June 30. The district had anticipated a $171,000 surplus for the general fund but actually had a $680,000 surplus.

He said that the current general fund balance is at approximately $4.7 million which represents about 25 percent of general fund expenditures and allow the district to operate for around three months without receiving any additional funding. The state encourages districts to have a fund balance equal to at least 15 percent of expenditures.

Walker reported that the higher than anticipated surplus level was one reason why the school board approved the idea of giving employees a retention bonus. The other reason was a change in other state funding that allowed the district to allocate some of those funds to the bonus program.

"This is to offset the smaller raises that employees received this year." he said. "The district set aside $437,800 for the bonus, which will be paid directly to all employees directly contracted with the school."

In other action, the board decided to opt out of taking a state grant for mental health and safety. "As the legislation currently stands, there are some problematic pieces of language tied to receiving the funding," Walker said. "If the district were to opt in, we would receive approximately $170,000 for mental health and safety."

"However, due to the problematic language, the district has chosen at this time not to opt in," he added. "This decision reflects the Board's commitment to responsible governance and the protection of sensitive information, while continuing to prioritize student safety through existing programs and initiatives."

He noted that the decision also represents the board's careful and deliberate exercise of its discretion, balancing the statutory conditions of the state funding with the district's responsibility to maintain operational and legal safeguards.

He pointed out that the school board's decision is consistent with what many districts in the region and across the state are doing. He noted that there is a clause in the resolution that allows him to opt Brandywine back into the funding if the state changes some of the language tied to the funding and he believes it is in the best interest of the district.

The board learned about a grant the district is getting to help with the CTE program and will vote on accepting it at their Nov. 24 meeting. The grant is for $3,500 and will allow the district to create an "Apprenticeship Wall" to promote available apprenticeships to students.

Niles man struck, injured by vehicle in Howard Township

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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HOWARD TOWNSHIP — A Niles man was injured in a car-vs.-pedestrian crash Friday in Howard Township, according to the Cass County Sheriff's office.

At approximately 6:06 p.m. Friday, Nov. 7, deputies with the Cass County Sheriff's office were called to investigate a car versus pedestrian crash at the intersection of Barron Lake Road and Cliffield Court in Howard Township.

Investigation showed that Joanne Haas, 55, of Cassopolis, was traveling north-bound on Barron Lake Road when her vehicle struck Donald Welsh, 78, of Niles, who was walking across Barron Lake Road from Cliffield Court. Welsh was transported to South Bend Memorial Hospital for injuries sustained in the crash.

Assisting in this crash was MSP, Howard Township Fire, and SMCAS. The crash remains under investigation.

Edwardsburg Lions Club to host 61st annual Christmas Tree Sale

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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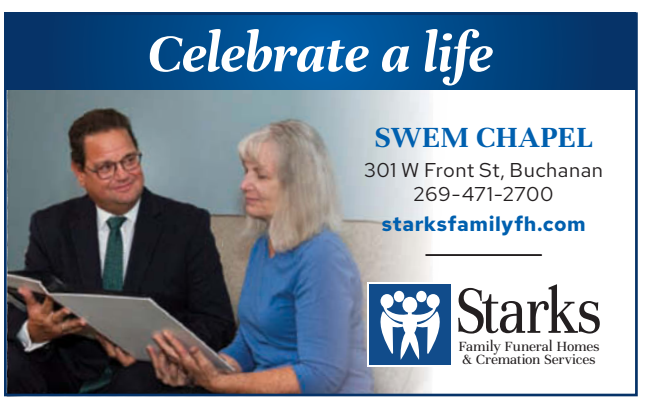
EDWARDSBURG — The Edwardsburg Lions Club is preparing for its 61st Annual Christmas Tree Sale, a fundraiser that supports local community projects within the Lions of Michigan District 11B2.

The live Christmas trees will be delivered to the Edwardsburg Fire Department, located at 69910 M-62, on Friday, Nov. 21. Trees will be available to purchase from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays.

The club is offering a wide selection of trees, including Frazer Fir (6 to 10 feet), Fralsam Fir (a hybrid cross of Frazer and Balsam, 5 to 10 feet), Colorado Spruce (6 to 8 feet), and Douglas Fir (6 to 8 feet).

The lot is well-lit and families are encouraged to bring the whole family to select their perfect tree.



Sports

Edwardsburg's Kuntz reaches milestone,
Page B2

Got results?
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Dowagiac's Rock to play in the 2025 Native All-American Game

Tanya Hagen / For Leader Publications

Devin Rock (pictured) has been selected one of 70 high school football players to participate in the 2025 Native All-American Game.

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

DOWAGIAC — Dowagiac's football season may be over but senior and Pokagon Band citizen Devin Rock has yet to play his last snap.

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan and Indiana has announced that Rock – spirit name is Zhawskwë nemki nene which means "blue thunder man" – has been selected one of 70 high school football players to participate in the 2025 Native All-American Game.

"I'm very excited to be selected for this incredible experience," Rock said. "I have a passion for football and I'm really excited to show the coaches and recruiters what I can do."

The game, presented by the Native American Athletic Foundation in partnership with the NFL and Minnesota Vikings, will take place on Sunday, Dec. 14, at U.S. Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Rock will play for the home team, Team Ta'Tanka, and will be coached by legendary Green Bay Packers rushing leader Ahman Green.

See **ROCK**, page B2

Hidalgo's big night leads the Irish past Akron

NOTRE DAME ATHLETICS

SOUTH BEND, Ind. – Hannah Hidalgo turned in the single-greatest individual performance in Notre Dame history in Wednesday's 85-58 win over Akron, breaking the program records for points in a game with 44 and steals in a game with 16 while also grabbing nine rebounds.

Hidalgo's 16 steals are not only the program record, passing her own mark of 12, but also the NCAA D-I all-time record for steals in a single game which was previously 14 and held by seven players.

To make the performance even more impressive, Hidalgo logged just 27:31 of game action in the victory. The junior was efficient in her scoring, finishing 16-for-25 from the field, 3-for-6 from beyond the arc and 9-for-11 from the free-throw line.

Cassandre Prosper joined Hidalgo in double figures with 14 points on 6-of-8 shooting from the floor.

Notre Dame wasted no time in building an early lead, jumping out to an early 14-4 advantage behind swarming defense that led to easy layups on the other end. Hidalgo registered four steals in the opening five minutes of action leading to eight quick points.

The Irish increased the lead to 13 by the end of the first frame, taking a 25-12 advantage into the second quarter. Hidalgo led the charge with 14 points, five rebounds, five steals and two assists in the opening 10 minutes of action.

Hidalgo continued her incredible run of play, scoring Notre Dame's first 14 points of the second quarter, totaling 28 in the first half.

Iyana Moore started to find her rhythm in her first game with the Irish, scoring five points in the final stages of the second quarter, as Notre Dame took a 14-point lead into the halftime break at 48-34.

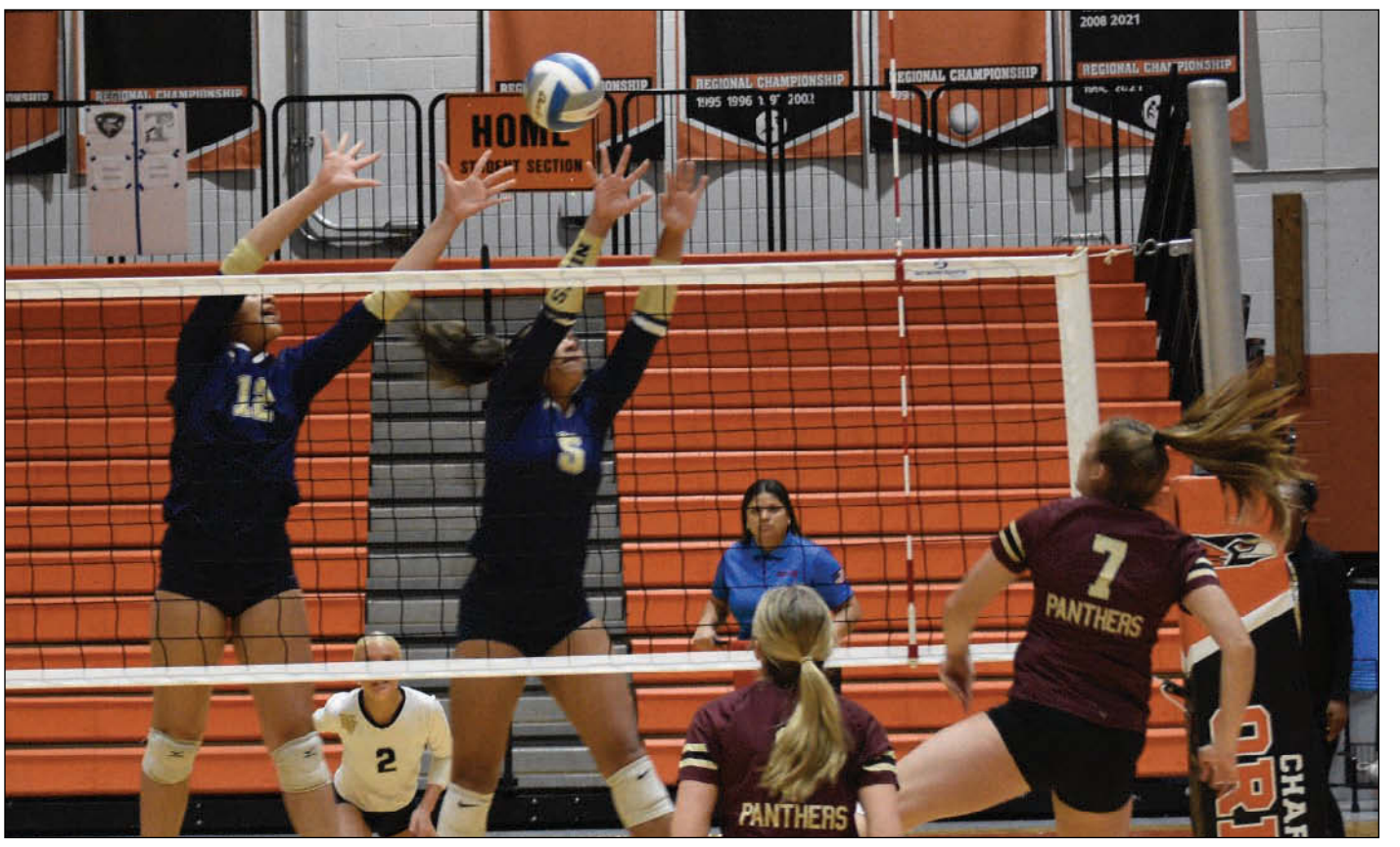
Notre Dame came out of the intermission and continued to build on its lead, outscoring the Zips 22-11 in the third quarter to take a commanding 70-45 lead into the final frame.

The Irish added 15 points over the last 10 minutes of regulation, paced by Prosper's eight-point fourth quarter, to go on and win by a final score of 85-58.

Hidalgo's 44 points breaks the program record for points in a game which was previously shared by Ruth Riley (41: Jan. 30, 1999 vs. Providence) and Jewell Loyd (41: Dec. 10, 2014 vs. DePaul). The 44-point performance also sets the Purcell Pavilion record which was previously held by Jessica Shepard (39: Dec. 17, 2017 vs. DePaul). Hidalgo is the first D-I women's player this season to crack the 40-point mark this season.

The Fighting Irish go on the road for the first time this season for the annual Shamrock Classic with a ranked matchup against rival No. 14 Michigan in Detroit. The game is slated to tip at 4 p.m. today and will air on NBC.

A valiant fight



Scott Hassinger / For Leader Publications

Niles' Nariyah Jones (12) and Braelyn Benjamin (5) work to block a kill attempt by Parma Western's freshman Georgia Addleman (7).

Niles volleyball falls in five sets in regional semifinal

By SCOTT HASSINGER
Leader Publications

CHARLOTTE — Niles' volleyball team fought back from two games down and eventually forced a fifth set before suffering a heartbreaking 20-25, 20-25, 25-14, 25-23, 12-15 Division 2 regional semifinal loss Tuesday to Parma Western at Charlotte High School.

The Vikings finish the season 16-17 overall, while Parma Western (41-9-3) advances to face Tecumseh (54-2), a 3-0 winner over Battle Creek Harper Creek in the other semifinal, in Thursday's championship at 6:30 p.m.

The match was a tough one to lose, especially for Niles' group of seniors.

"When it comes to high school athletics, that last game for your seniors is the final time they will play with their teammates. This was an amazing group of seniors that worked hard and were great leaders all season and they really wanted to win this match tonight," said Niles assistant varsity coach Lashonda Greene. "Right now this stings really bad, but this is a great group of individuals who are going to go far in their futures."

Niles led twice early in the opening set and found itself tied with Parma Western seven times. But the Panthers surged and built a six-point lead, 23-17, late in the game. The Vikings rallied to within three, 23-20, following two kills from by Braelyn Benjamin and one from Neriah Stephens. Parma Western closed out the set on a Ella Wilcox kill and took advantage of a Niles' error.

Niles dug itself a 15-6 deficit in the second set, before eventually tying the game score at 18-18 on an ace by freshman Mena Hover. But Parma Western won a pair of long rallies and got critical kills from Wilcox and Georgia Addleman to put the game away and take a 2-0 match advantage.

"We started slow and with less energy and intensity. We weren't communicating and played without much excitement. It took us a while to find our game and pick ourselves back up to play at the level we needed to in order to win this game tonight. We picked up our play more and more as the match went on, but we fell behind three points in that fifth set and couldn't recover. I think if we could've came out with more intensity we could've taken some of those earlier games. Parma Western was the better team tonight," Greene said.

The Vikings fell behind early in game three, but rallied behind the serving of star outside hitter Nyla Hover. Two consecutive aces by the senior helped the Vikings grab a 10-9 advantage. The Niles' lead ballooned to 20-10 as the older Hover served 13 consecutive points, including seven aces. The Vikings got some key tips for points at the net in that incredible sequence, along with key kills from Stephens, Nariyah Jones and Mena Hover. Niles got late kills from Jones and Stephens and capitalized on unforced errors by Parma Western to win the game to win the game and reduce its match deficit to 2-1.

Jones' kill moved Niles into a 9-9 deadlock with Parma Western in the fourth game. The Vikings' Bella Castillo stepped up to serve four straight points, including one ace, to put her ballclub on top 13-9. From that point the game score would be tied eight different times until Niles later grabbed a 24-22 lead on successive kills from Jones and Mena Hover. The Panthers pulled within a point, 24-23 on Kasyn Saari's kill. But the Vikings won the game to even it up at 2-2 after Saari's next serve hit the net.

After seven lead changes to start the fifth set, Niles rallied from two points down to even the game score at 11-11 on Nyla Hover's ace. Kills from Wilcox and Izzy Schlundt gave the Panthers a 13-11 edge. Benjamin's kill for Niles brought the Vikings within a point at 13-12. Parma Western scored the final two points, however, to close out the match.

"We are a team of energy and positivity and that's what we knew we needed those last three games to give ourselves a shot. When we have that amongst each other that's when we play our best. Finding our energy level and increasing our intensity was a game-changer," Greene said.

Greene stated one of the high points of the season was avenging an earlier-season loss to Edwardsburg. The Lady Vikings beat the Eddies in a five-set thriller in the district finals to capture its second consecutive district championship.

See **FIGHT**, page B2

Niles baseball standouts sign with Youngstown State, Houston

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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NILES — A pair of Niles standouts are taking their baseball talents to the next level.

Surrounded by friends, family, teammates and coaches, seniors Brenden Olsen and Jaxen Racht signed their letters of intent to play college baseball Wednesday at Niles High School.

Olsen signed with the University of Houston, a Division I program that competes in the Big 12 Conference. Racht signed with Youngstown State University, a Division 1 program that competes in the Horizon League.

"It generally felt great," Olsen said. "It's something I wished for and worked for my whole life and to finally make my dreams become reality has been something so special."

"It feels good. I've been waiting for this for a while," Racht said. "It's good to get it out of the way and to have things established. Now I can go through the year and enjoy it. It's special and it's cool to have everyone here, too."

Olsen, a three-sport standout in football, basketball and baseball, saw his recruitment take off following a standout junior baseball season that saw him emerge into one of southwest Michigan's top prospects. Olsen finished his junior season with a .401 batting average, nine home runs, 39 RBI and 20 stolen bases as the Vikings earned a Division 2 district title.

See **SIGN**, page B2

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Seniors Brenden Olsen and Jaxen Racht signed their letters of intent to play college baseball Wednesday at Niles High School.

ROCK

From page B1

The annual event includes a four-day camp from Dec. 10 to 13, where participants will train under former NFL players, including Green, Derek Fine, Levi Horn and Chase Johnson. Participants will also take part in leadership workshops and hear from community leaders. The event is also a high-profile recruiting opportunity for players, with college and professional organizations and national media expected to be in attendance.

Rock is a four-year member of the Dowagiac varsity football team and has started for three years as defensive back on defense and playing running back, slot receiver and wide receiver on offense.

"There is no one player more deserving of this honor, Devin is a hard-working young man and a leader in the making," said Dowagiac Football Coach Duane Davis. "I am excited and proud of this young man and the great things that are ahead of him in life. Devin is a great representation of the school and the community."

Over the course of his high school career, Rock has earned First Team All-Conference defensive back as a junior and is currently among the top in the state for interceptions this year, a two-time AAU Junior Olympics Qualifier, First Team All-Conference in the 4x400 meter and 4x200 meter relays in track and field and MVP awards for football and basketball during his freshman year.

Rock has also worked as a referee for many youth football games and enjoys spending time mentoring the younger players in the community. Outside of the world of sports, over the summer Devin worked for the Boys and Girls Club of Southwest Michigan which was hosted by the Pokagon Band and currently works at Lindy's Restaurant in Cassopolis.

"We couldn't be more proud of Devin Rock for this distinguished honor of being selected for the 2025 Native All-American Game," said Pokagon Band Tribal Council Chairman Matthew Wesaw. "He is a very talented and accomplished student athlete that sets a great example for our Native American youth to emulate. We'll be looking forward to watching him play on December 14."

NAAF is currently running a fundraiser to cover the travel and related expenses for students to attend the game.

FIGHT

From page B1

"That's something these girls can cherish and take with them. That's a big accomplishment in itself. I'm happy they earned at least one championship trophy before the season ended," Greene said.

Parma Western head coach JoDee Johnston felt her team's experience this season of playing in tight matches made a big difference for her team.

"Our girls are used to playing in close matches. Niles is a super athletic team and if we aren't on our 'A' defensively then they are going to score points in runs and that's exactly what they did to get themselves back into the match. We struggled against their two strong middle hitters and getting to the ball off the block. That's where they got a lot of their points in those latter games," Johnston said.

Addleman finished with 13 kills and six blocks for Parma Western. Wilcox added 12 kills. Aubree Allen contributed seven kills and six blocks for the Panthers and Saari added 16 digs.

Dowagiac High School hosts fall sports banquet

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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DOWAGIAC — The fall sports season has come to an end and several Dowagiac athletes were recognized for their success.

The Dowagiac athletic department hosted its fall sports banquet Sunday, Nov. 9 to celebrate Chieftains who made an impact for their respective sports.

Football

The Chieftains placed seven players on the All-Lakeland Conference First Team. Johannah McDonald was named First Team All-Conference Kicker and earned Individual Academic All State. In a 69-12 Sept. 12 win over Benton Harbor, she converted 9 of 10 extra points, one off the school record of 10 set by Brett Scanlon in 2010 and tied the most extra points made by a female kicker in Michigan since 2019 when Faith Kittleson made nine consecutive extra points for Berrien Springs.

Devin Rock was named First Team All-Conference (DB) and earned Team Defensive MVP. Rock also received the 4-Year Varsity Award. Quentin Hill was named First Team All-Conference (DB) and earned Team Offensive MVP. Hill also received the 4-Year Varsity Award.

Austin Thunell was named First Team All-Conference (OL) and earned Individual Academic All State. Cameron White was named First Team All-Conference (DB/LB), Marcus Wares was named First Team All-Conference (DB), Khalif Reyna was named First Team All-Conference (DL) and Tim Masterman was named First Team All-Conference Punter.

Tanya Hagen / For Leader Publications

Johannah McDonald (83) kicks attempts an extra point against Benton Harbor on Sept. 12.

Riley McCaffery received Honorable Mention (DL) and Hill also received Honorable Mention at Running Back (RB). DJ Shivers was recognized as the JV Football MVP.

Volleyball

Two Chieftains were recognized with First Team All- Lakeland Conference selections and top honors. Marlie Carpenter earned First Team All-Conference honors, was named the team's Offensive Player of the Year and received All-Region recognition. Carpenter also earned Individual Academic All-State. Riley Todd was also named First Team All-Conference.

Tessa Deering was named Defensive Player of the Year. She also earned the 4-Year Varsity Award, Honorable Mention, and Individual Academic All State. Hanah McCuddy earned the Four-Year Varsity Award, Honorable Mention and Individual Academic All-State.

Zabrina Shivers was named All-Region MVP and received Honorable Mention All-Conference, Brianna Campbell received Honorable Mention All-Region and Ava Nate received Honorable Mention All-Conference.

Golf

Bryanna Behnke and Jaden Kusch each earned First Team All-Conference, MVP, the 4-Year Varsity Award and Individual Academic All-State and Olivia Stockwell received the 4-Year Varsity Award and Individual Academic All State recognition. Charlotte Maxey earned Honorable Mention honors and the entire Dowagiac golf team was named Team Academic All-State.

Soccer

Austin Hart led the team, earning First Team All Conference, Honorable Mention All District and MVP honors. Andres Brito received an Honorable Mention All-Conference award and the 4-Year Varsity Award and Angel Brito was recognized with an Honorable Mention.

Cross Country

For the girls team, Sadie Bonczynski and Jocelyn Kiner were both named First Team All-Conference and earned MVP honors. Kiner also received the 4-Year Varsity Award. Balois Franco earned MVP honors for the boys team and Josue Morales-Perez received Honorable Mention.

Sideline Cheer

Alexis Campbell was named MVP of the sideline cheer team.

Niles dominates All-Wolverine Conference squad

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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NILES — The Niles football team was recognized by the Wolverine Conference for its efforts throughout its historic season.

Head Coach Scot Shaw was named the Wolverine Conference Coach of the Year for guiding the Vikings to its third consecutive undefeated conference season and its first undefeated regular season since 1979.

Nick Shelton / For Leader Publications

Niles Head Football Coach was named the Wolverine Conference Coach of the Year.

The Vikings placed eight players on All-Conference First Teams: Brandon Hamilton, Chase Brawley, Alex Anderson and Elijah Norris on First Team Offense and Jayelin Vawter, Ward Cheney, RJ Fiedler and Brenden Olsen on First Team Defense. The Vikings averaged 36.2 points per game and the defense gave up just 12.8 points per game.

Max Rucker was named to the Second Team for defense and Trenton Scott was named to the Second Team for offense. Evan Williams, Shane Barber and Guy Torres earned Honorable Mention recognition.

Edwardsburg placed two players on First Teams in Logan Kovach on offense and Luke Bidwell on defense. Luke Harman and Gio Orue made Second Team Offense and Cameron Hayden made Second Team Defense.

Niles athletes earn postseason honors

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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NILES — Niles athletes earned numerous All-Conference, All-District and Academic awards for the 2025 fall season.

Michael Matlock earned First Team All-Wolverine Conference honors, was named to the All District Team and received the All Academic Award for soccer. His teammates Beau and Ceon Kirtdoll both received Honorable Mention All Conference recognition. Swimmer Lyla Holtgren earned First Team All Conference and qualified for state competition.

For volleyball, freshman Mena Hover was named to the Second Team All-Conference and senior libero Maddie Zache received Honorable Mention All-Conference honors.

The No. 2 doubles tennis team of Shawn Atkins and Matthew Richards earned All- Wolverine Conference Honorable Mention.

Roadrunners earn 16 league, region awards

SMC ATHLETICS

DOWAGIAC — After a 29-9 season, the 2025 SMC Volleyball Team was recognized with a haul of sixteen individual athletic awards.

Meah Evans and Lily Kowalik were named to the MCCAA Western Conference All-Freshman Team and Maggie Arnie received an Honorable Mention for the All-Western Conference Team. Ryli Burks was recognized with a spot on the Second Team, All-Western Conference while Amie Schutz, Carlie Ritchie, Meah Evans and Lily Kowalik were honored as First Team, All-Western Conference.

Schutz won Western Conference Player of the Year and Head Coach Jenny Nate was Western Conference Coach of the Year. Schutz, Ritchie, Evans and Kowalik were also named to the All-MCCAA Team and Schutz and Ritchie were honored as two of only 18 members of the All-Region XII Team.

KUNTZ RECORDS 500TH DIG FOR EDWARDSBURG

Jeff Douglas / For Leader Publications

Edwardsburg junior Sophia Kuntz recorder her 500th dig against Niles in the Division 2 district finals Thursday, Nov. 6 at Buchanan.

Hover surpasses 1,000 digs

By MAXWELL HARDEN
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BUCHANAN — Niles' Nyla Hover reached an exclusive club Wednesday, Nov. 5 when she tallied her 1,000th dig during the district semifinal match against Dowagiac.

"I really was not expecting it," Hover said. "I didn't think I was remotely close for this game, so when they held it up, I was really emotional, because volleyball has been my life for twelve years and I'm nearing the end, so it was a really big accomplishment for me."

The Niles senior enjoyed the journey with her teammates. The Vikings advanced to the regional semifinal round before falling to Parma Western in five sets.

"For me, it''s been really emotional," she said. "I'm playing my last season with my little sister [Mena Hover], so that makes it 10 times better, but I've grown up with all these girls play travel with all these girls, so we are all super close. It just feels really good to be able to do my last season with my best friends."

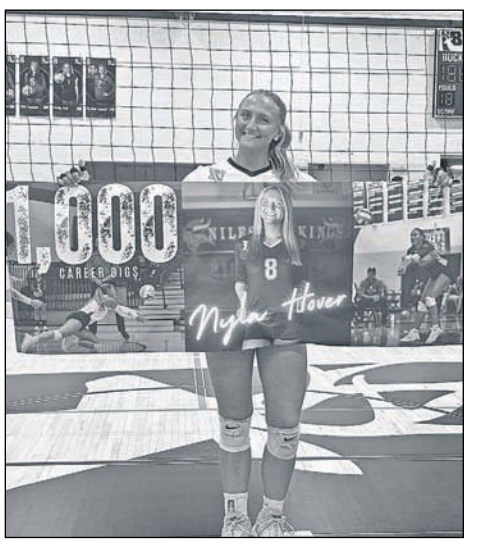

Photo provided

Nyla Hover recorder her 1,000th dig in a win over Dowagiac Wednesday, Nov. 5.

SIGN

From page B1

Both Olsen and Racht participated in the 2025 Prep Baseball Senior Future Games in Emerson, Georgia over the summer. The event was an exclusive two-day, invitation-only event for the best Class of 2026 prospects from across the country. A week later, Houston reached out to Olsen and invited him to visit the campus.

"They got me down quick," Olsen said. "Once I got there, it just felt so welcoming. Everybody was so nice. The place is beautiful. Everything about it felt special, so I felt like it was an easy decision as I got down there."

Ranked as the No. 8 player in Michigan by Prep Baseball Report, Racht has racked up 228 strikeouts over the last three seasons as a right-handed pitcher for the Vikings. For Racht, Youngstown State was the perfect fit.

"I've talked to a lot of coaches, went on a few visits and narrowed it down to a few places, but it came down to who valued me the most, where I see myself at the most, what I want to study and the overall environment," Racht said. "I went there and felt like it was home there. I thought it was the best decision I could make."

With the ink dry on their collegiate decisions, both athletes look forward to making the most of their last eight months as Niles athletes.

"You always want to go win it all," Racht said of his final baseball season. "I want to enjoy it and go out there and give it my all."

"I just want to try to lead both basketball and baseball teams as far as we can go," Olsen said. "I love all the sports I did. I'm sad the football ended as fast as I did, but I look forward to spending time with my close friends because I'm gonna be going miles and miles away. I've been doing a lot of things at church and youth group and we talk about being present in the moment, so this is one of those things where I'm around all the people I know, all the people I love and just being present being in the moment is truly special."

Paxton Media Group E-edition EXTRA

FOCUS

72 peaks. 31 days. One legend.

Kilian Jornet's mind-blowing mountain marathon

Robyn Beck / AFP / Getty Images / TNS

Spain's Kilian Jornet powers uphill in the first five miles of the 100-mile Western States Endurance Run, on June 28 in Olympic Valley, California. The Western States Endurance Run, the world's oldest 100-mile trail race, takes 369 runners cross country from Olympic Valley, California to the finish line in Auburn, California.

By JACK DOLAN
Los Angeles Times (TNS)

Kilian Jornet, one of the world's most accomplished mountaineers, did something this month that left even other elite athletes gasping: He climbed all 72 summits in the contiguous United States that stand over 14,000 feet tall.

In 31 days.

That's like climbing California's Mt. Whitney – the nation's tallest mountain outside of Alaska – two-and-a-half times per day, every day, for a month.

But reaching so many summits, so quickly, was only half the battle. In fact, it was "the fun part," a surprisingly rested-looking Jornet said in a Zoom interview from Seattle earlier this month, three days after summiting Mt. Rainier in knee-deep snow to complete the grueling journey, which he started in early September.

The hard part was negotiating the spaces in between.

"If you're driving, you see the landscape," Jornet explained. "But you don't feel it."

OK, how do you feel it?

By running the hundreds of miles of remote mountain ridges, and biking the thousands of miles of desolate highway, that separate the towering summits scattered across Colorado, California and Washington.

In total, Jornet covered 3,198 miles under his own power. He biked 2,568 miles. He ran 629 miles. He climbed 403,638 vertical feet.

Tommy Caldwell, arguably the best technical rock climber of his generation and the first to climb Yosemite's nearly impossible Dawn Wall, followed Jornet's progress on Instagram. When the Spaniard finished, Caldwell posted, "my mind is officially blown."

Like many elite climbers, Jornet, 37, slips into a stoic, been-there-done-that voice when describing mountain conditions that would terrify mere mortals. But he broke character, briefly, talking about climbing the summit of Mt. Shasta in Northern California.

As often happens on that free-standing volcano, a howling gale struck just as Jornet approached the 14,162-foot summit.

Shaky video shot by a climbing partner shows Jornet's trekking poles flailing and his feet sliding around on the ice as he struggles – and fails – to remain upright in what sounds like a hurricane.

"It was crazy," he conceded, "probably the windiest day I have ever had in the mountains."

Asked why, exactly, he puts himself through so much agony, he snapped back into aw-shucks mode. He sank into his comfy seat, smiled with the confidence of a man who has parried that question a thousand times, and said:

"Why not?"

■■■

In an age saturated with professional outdoor athletes competing for social media attention and lucrative sponsorships – and in a world where the most iconic summits have been climbed, the biggest waves have been surfed and the wildest rivers have been run – one fashionable way to stand out is by setting a fastest known time, or "FKT."

Jornet's jaunt over and between those 72 summits, which he dubbed "States of Elevation" and gorgeously documented for his 1.8 million followers on Instagram, was, by all accounts, the fastest known time. It was also the only known time. Apparently, nobody else has tried to link all of those summits together in a single, human-powered push.

"Yes, it's hard," Jornet said with a laugh when asked if the constant, grinding pain was worth it. But after a while, "you get used to the discomfort, it's just part of it, it doesn't really bother you."

The finale of Jornet's 72-peak feat was a 14,441-foot volcano covered with glaciers, one of the broadest and most visually imposing mountains on the planet. Few people even attempt to climb Mt. Rainier this time of year because the weather can be so brutal.

As Jornet pedaled closer to the peak, it started to rain down in the flats, so he knew that meant snow on the mountain.

Crossing the glaciers with their immense, yawning crevasses hidden by fresh snow would have been too dangerous, so Jornet chose a steep and challenging rock route known as Success Cleaver. But even that was buried in knee-deep snow.

After summiting Mt. Rainier, Jornet posted that his U.S. journey was, "never about just the numbers, but rather a deep connection to wild places, and true test of resilience in body and mind."

Anyone else claiming that might have been met with eye rolls, but Jornet is one of the few outdoor athletes who probably doesn't need to pad his resume: He cemented his legacy as one of the all-time greats long ago.

Born just outside of Barcelona in 1987, he grew up in a ski area in the Pyrenees where his father was a mountain guide. He climbed his first mountain over 10,000 feet when he was 5.

At 20, he won the first of six titles in the Sky Runner World Series, an international competition consisting of long, high-altitude foot races that test speed and endurance on steep mountainsides.

At 26, he set FKTs for climbing Switzerland's Matterhorn and France's Mont Blanc, the tallest mountain in Western Europe. A year later, he broke the speed record climbing the bitterly cold and deadly Denali, in Alaska, the tallest mountain in North America.

A few years after that, he climbed Mt. Everest twice in one week without supplemental oxygen.

In addition to all of the technical mountaineering, Jornet has been one of the most successful ultramarathoners in history, winning the prestigious Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc, a 100-mile race through the Alps, four times.

After his early career dominating distance races in relatively cold climates, Jornet showed up at Northern California's Western States ultramarathon in 2010. It's a 100-mile race that starts near the shore of Lake Tahoe and descends to the Sacramento suburbs in late June, when the sun and temperatures can be unforgiving.

He was comically unprepared. "I didn't do any heat training," Jornet recalled, "so when I arrived I was like, 'Should I have brought water for this race?'" Still, he came in third, then returned the next year to win.

In June, he went back to the Western States 100 for the first time in 14 years. The event has evolved since then: The field is fitter and more professional. But even at his relatively advanced age, Jornet came in third, dropping more than an hour off his winning time in 2011.

Back then, he relied mostly on raw talent, Jornet said. "I train much better now, I know I need to prepare specifically and put in the work."

But does he ever just kick back and spend a weekend sprawled on the couch, a remote in one hand and a bowl of ice cream in the other?

"For me, that's not relaxing," he said, recalling the time he and his wife, Emelie Forsberg, also a world champion runner and skier, tried to take a normal vacation.

They had just completed a race on Reunion Island, off the coast of Madagascar, when they decided to spend a week on the nearby tropical island of Mauritius.

"We said we'd just sit on the beach and read books, and that's all," Jornet said. But by the end of the first day they looked at each other and wondered if they should change their flight to get back to running and skiing in the mountains. "It was like, yes, yes, yes for both of us," Jornet said.

After years living in Chamonix, France, a hard-partying resort in the Alps regarded as the mountain sports capital of the world, Jornet and Forsberg moved to a house by a remote fjord in Norway. It's a quiet place to raise their three young children, grow their own vegetables and train in the surrounding mountains, some of which have no names.

"Sometimes when you're climbing Everest, or Mont Blanc, or Mt. Whitney, it's like you're climbing the famous name," Jornet said. As he matures, he prefers climbing mountains simply "because they're beautiful."

But he still craves big challenges.

Last year, he climbed all 82 summits in the Alps over 4,000 meters (13,123 feet) in 19 days, traveling the 750 miles between them on foot and bicycle.

"This was, without any doubt, the most challenging thing I've ever done in my life, mentally, physically, and technically," he wrote on social media. "But also maybe the most beautiful."

That got him thinking even bigger, trying to imagine the most "aesthetic line" for a similar expedition in the United States.

■■■

After landing in Denver last month, he went straight to the trailhead for 14,256-foot Longs Peak. "But I really felt like crap," he said, blaming a combination of jet lag and the air being so much drier in Colorado than in Norway.

For the first week, he wondered if he should just quit. But then, somewhere along the way, his body switched, "from fighting to adapting," and he settled into a comfortable rhythm.

After summiting 56 mountains in Colorado, Jornet hopped on his bike and pedaled 900 miles to California, where 15 more high peaks awaited. At times, the headwind was so brutal he slowed to a maddening crawl, even when going downhill.

He'd also lost 10 pounds in the mountains and, at 5'7" and about 130 pounds, his slender frame has nothing to spare. So he spent much of his time on the bike shoveling calories – even spiking his water bottles with generous helpings of olive oil – to replace lost fat.

His long slog on the bike ended in Lone Pine, a dusty town four hours north of Los Angeles, where the Eastern Sierra rise 10,000 feet, like a solid granite wall, from the desert floor.

Jornet had covered nearly 200 miles that day, and faced a 6,000-foot climb to the Cottonwood Lakes trailhead, where he would sleep before starting the toughest part of the whole trip.

The road up to Cottonwood Lakes is 23 miles of harrowing switchbacks, with vertigo-inducing views of the valley below at almost every turn. The drive, alone, freaks out a lot of people.

"It was cool that I arrived there in the dark," Jornet said, undaunted by the prospect of pedaling off the side of a cliff. "Nice to do the climb when it wasn't so hot."

The next morning he started running "Norman's 13" – a baker's dozen of 14,000-foot summits along the Sierra Crest between Lone Pine and Bishop, the most remote and punishing alpine terrain in California. He made astonishing time: cruising over 14,032-foot Mt. Langley and 14,505-froot Mt. Whitney like they were speed bumps.

But for all their imposing altitude, the standard routes up Langley and Whitney don't require any special skills, they're just long hiking trails with very little exposure to deadly falls. Things changed when Jornet reached a section called the Palisades Traverse, just up the hill from Big Pine.

There, a ridge of jagged granite rises like an upside down saw's blade over one of the last remaining glaciers in California. There are no hiking trails, just daunting towers of shattered and jumbled rock, where seemingly any misstep can lead to a thousand-foot fall.

Only the most committed mountaineers go there, and they tend to take their time, waiting for good weather and climbing with ropes and harnesses.

But when you're on a mission like Jornet's, you don't get to "choose your weather," he said. You just start and then you're committed, you have to take what comes.

■■■

What came the day he reached the traverse was a surprising, early-season blizzard. It covered the usually reliable, grippy granite with about 4 inches of snow and ice. The storm made climbing "more complicated," Jornet said, and more miserable.

It was cold and "I was completely soaked," Jornet said. But with the help of Matt Cornell, a well-known climber from Bishop, he was able to keep going and finish the 100 miles of Norman's 13 in 56 hours, shaving more than 19 hours off the previous record.

He only slept once during that span, he said, for about an hour and a half, lying in the middle of a trail.

When speed climbing over peaks, Jornet traveled light, carrying only the bare essentials to stay nourished and protected from the weather.

When possible, he was accompanied by photographers and videographers, most of whom had to be exceptional athletes to keep up.

He also stayed in contact with his press team and social media producers, and he sometimes slept in a support RV at the trailheads.

But after the frigid Palisades Traverse he indulged in a bit of luxury, pizza and a glorious night in a hotel bed in Bishop. The next morning, he hiked 14,252-foot White Mountain and then hopped on the bike for the 500-mile ride to the unexpected ordeal that awaited him on Mt. Shasta.

Having survived that with no serious damage, he biked through Oregon, finally with a tailwind, and then surmounted Mt. Rainier.

When he finally descended, instead of popping champagne in front of cameras and an adoring crowd, he and a few close friends spent a quiet night in an RV, swapping stories from the road and sharing shots of pickle juice – an inside joke that started somewhere during the trip.

"I'm not a big celebration guy," Jornet explained.

He wouldn't say what his next project will be, but several times he returned to the idea of climbing without crowds or fanfare.

"I do these things because I love them, because they bring me joy and happiness, not because I think they're very important."

One place he can sit quietly is at home in Norway, looking out the window, across the fjord to the nameless, snowcapped mountains in the distance.

He lets his eyes linger on their faces, settling on pretty lines to climb up or ski down.

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0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF Berrien

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

Case No.
2025-0188-DE-R

Estate of:
Robert Bradley Johnson
Date of birth: 02/20/1970

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The decedent, Robert Bradley Johnson, died 03/06/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to, Cheryl Johnson, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 811 Port St. St. Joseph, MI 49085 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 11/05/2025

Peter W. Smith P22999
Attorney name Bar no.
423 Sycamore St., Ste 102, PO Box 67
Address
Niles, MI 49120
City, State, Zip
269-683-3300
Telephone no.

Cheryl Johnson
Personal representative
6798 Sunset Dr
Address
Coloma, MI 49038
City, state, zip

Classifieds Make A Cash Connection!

0900 LEGALS

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
COUNTY OF BERRIEN

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE AND CREDITORS NOTICE

FILE NO.
2025-0842-DE-J

ESTATE OF: Lynda L. Redington, **Deceased**
Date of Birth: April 16, 1973

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS including creditors and heirs of the deceased whose address(es) are unknown and whose interest in the matter may be barred or affected by the following:

Be advised that a Petition for Determination of Heirs has been filed with the Court and a hearing on said Petition will be held on **Tuesday, November 25, 2025, at 10:15 A.M.**, at the Berrien County Court House, 811 Port Street, Saint Joseph, MI 49085.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS: The Decedent, Lynda L. Redington, who lived at 1985 West River Road, Niles, MI, died May 11, 2024.

Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Dr. Lloyd Redington Jr., named personal representative, or to the probate court at 811 Port Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085-1183 and the named personal representative within four (4) months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date November 15, 2025

Robert L. Landgraf, Jr. (P23000)
Attorney
Post Office Box 1310
Niles, Michigan 49120
(269)683-8300

Dr. Lloyd Redington Jr.
Petitioner
1985 West River Road
Niles, Michigan 49120

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
Cass COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

FILE NO.
2025-259-DE
Judge Carol Montavon Bealor

Estate of: Norma J. Mark
Date of birth: 07/18/1934

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Norma J. Mark, died 07/19/2025. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Greg A. Mark, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 11/07/2025

Paulette M. Anderson
Attorney name
7255 Crossleigh Court, Ste 104
Address
Toledo, OH 43617
City, State, Zip
419-517-7377
Telephone no.

Greg A. Mark
Personal representative
22047 Christiana Street
Address
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
City, state, zip
269-445-7092
Telephone no.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
PROBATE COURT
Cass COUNTY

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Decedent's Estate

FILE NO.
25-13-DE

Estate of:
Kerry Lane Kvanli, Dec.
Date of birth: 11/22/1954

TO ALL CREDITORS: *

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Kerry Lane Kvanli, died 04/20/2022. Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Joel Kvanli, personal representative, or to both the probate court at 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date 10/30/2025

Gregory H. Feldman P48645
Attorney name Bar no.
69045 M-62, Ste 6
Address
Edwardsburg, MI 49112
City, State, Zip
269-414-4249
Telephone no.

Joel Kvanli
Personal representative
85 Whitetaile Dr.
Address
Searcy, AR 72143
City, state, zip

0900 LEGALS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
The Niles Housing Commission has issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the performance of audit services in the operation of its public housing authority facilities located in the City of Niles, Michigan. All proposals in response to the RFP must be submitted in the format specified in the RFP, which can be downloaded from the City of Niles website at www.nilesmi.org under the "Frequently Requested" tab. Proposals must be submitted on or before December 3, 2025 in accordance with the RFP instructions.

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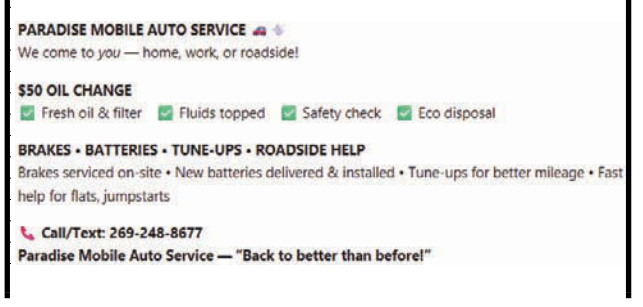
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Case No. 24-000609-CH Circuit Court Sale In pursuance and by virtue of an Order Granting Motion for Default Judgment and for Judicial Foreclosure as to All Defendants in the Circuit Court for the County of Cass, State of Michigan, made and entered on the 4th of August, A.D., 2025 in a certain cause therein pending, wherein CitiMortgage, Inc. was the Plaintiff and Any and all heirs, Assignees and Devisees of Esther A. Gogley and Rosalie Simpson were the Defendants. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I shall sell at public auction to the highest bidder, at public vendue, at the Cass County Courthouse (that being the place of holding the Circuit Court for said County), on the 14th of January, A.D., 2026 at 10:00 o`clock in the forenoon, Eastern Standard Time, the following described property, viz: A certain piece or parcel of land situated in the Township of Penn, County of Cass, State of Michigan: LOT NUMBER TEN (10), IN THE VILLAGE OF JAMESTOWN, ACCORDING TO THE RECORDED PLAT THEREOF. 14-100-100-010-00 c/k/a: 19125 Quaker St, Cassopolis, MI 49031 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale. Clint Roach, Deputy Sheriff _/s/ Melissa Z. Prantzalos Melissa Z. Prantzalos of Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. Attorney for CitiMortgage, Inc. Schneiderman & Sherman P.C. 23938 Research Dr, Suite 300 Farmington Hills, MI 48335 1576877 (11-15)(12-20)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on November 26, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Brandon L. Petersheim, married man
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): Ruoff Mortgage Company, Inc.
Date of Mortgage: June 6, 2023
Date of Mortgage Recording: June 7, 2023
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $205,382.31
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Village of Cassopolis, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Commencing at the East quarter post of Section 35, Town 6 South, Range 15 West; thence South 5 rods; thence West 18 rods; thence North 5 rods; thence East 18 rods to the place of beginning. EXCEPT the West 8 rods thereof.
Common street address (if any): 510 S O Keefe St, Cassopolis, MI 49031-1225
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: October 25, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1575157 (10-25)(11-15)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on December 10, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information: Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Stanley William Davis, a married man Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns Foreclosing Assignee (if any): PennyMac Loan Services LLC Date of Mortgage: July 23, 2004 Date of Mortgage Recording: July 29, 2004 Amount claimed due on date of notice: $56,079.43 Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lot(s) 2 of BURMAX PARK, according to the Plat thereof recorded in Liber 1-E of Plats, Page(s) 271 of Cass County Records. Common street address (if any): 27919 Burmax Park, Dowagiac, MI 49047-9644 The redemption period shall be 1 year from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a. If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: November 8, 2025
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145, Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1576401 (11-08)(11-29)

Economy Storage, 2206 Yankee Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday September 27, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.

Unit #	Name	Unit #	Name
10	Charmin Kelly	**321**	James Browning
22	Amber Bedenfield	**330**	Sheila Kollars
28	Emalee Anderson	**342**	Terrence Moss
56	Nathan Thomas	**346**	DaMonica Williams
57	Caleb Dubik	**351**	Lyman Bybie
67	Jerome Jankowiak	**379**	Bobbie Helms
77	Stoney Tittle	**389**	Parnell Jenkins
82	Ericka Pitone	**399**	Les Hart
94	Joshua Thompson	**403**	Xavier Williams
116	Melissa Kaeding	**410/534**	Rebecca Coleman
125/179	Steve Kelley	**427**	McCade Reese
127/633	Chris Norris	**429**	Aaron Haynes
145/467/468	Michael Merritt	**432**	Mare Williams
168	Gene Robertson	**449**	Ronald Schmal
173	George Tovey III	**451**	Jean Fitch
177	Larry Wegrecki	**513**	Justin Scott
183	Cindy Fisher	**677/567**	Julie Potate
184/66	Mary Anderson	**530**	Justin Landis
191	Alan Smith	**518**	Dawn Lintz
192	Patricia Yoder	**541**	Nicole Hurt
195	Daniel Beushauser	**545**	Candy Whitmire
196	Colton Wedgworth	**577**	Stephanie Pellow
205	Nancy Bombrys	**605**	Michael Lewark
228/367	Shawnette Booker	**613**	Nicole Jones
272	Kurt Shepard	**616**	Nathaniel Sherres
273	Tony Pompey	**638**	Britney Stanczyk
278	Chelsie Carlyle	**660**	Steve Sharrai
284	Kathleen Peters	**665**	Rodney Prescott

Niles U-Stor-It, 1314 E. Main Street, Niles, MI49120. Auction Saturday September 27, 2025, at 10:30 a.m.

23 Miranda Wendzel **54** Cynthia Swisher **57** Nathan Haynes

J & J Storage, 2220 S. 13th Street and 2627 S. 11th Street, Niles, MI 49120. Auction Saturday September 27, 2025, at 11:00 a.m.

59	Shara Brody	**379**	Amanda McCombs
389	Llandon Ross	**373**	Rhonda Sue Outlaw
423	Tianne Double	**372**	Albert Felder
426	James Schilling Jr.	**346**	Joe Jones
428	Brian Walls	**292**	The Woodshed Crafts
452	Aaron Smith	**250**	Robert Clayton/Jessica Vissik
481	Natosha Libertowski	**238/466**	James Diss
496	Nicole Brugh	**230**	Felisha Liberty
521	Paul Mowrey	**206**	Larry Morbach
97	Blake King	**227**	Jennifer Nichols
126A	John Daniel	**168**	Jerol Williams Jr.
200A	Mike Nidiffer	**140**	Ronnie West
311A	Michael Tapia		

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on DECEMBER 3, 2025. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Jerry L. Parker and Theresa Hart, husband and wife, to Fifth Third Bank (Western Michigan), Mortgagee, dated March 13, 2009, and recorded April 24, 2009, in Liber 993, Page 913 Cass County Records, Michigan. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of One Hundred Forty-Six Thousand One Hundred Eight and 89/100 Dollars ($146,108.89).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on DECEMBER 3, 2025.
Said premises are located in the City of Jones, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
PART OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SECTION 35, TOWN 6 SOUTH, RANGE 13 WEST, DESCRIBED AS: BEGINNING AT THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION 35; THENCE WEST ALONG THE SOUTH LINE OF SAID SECTION, 463.86 FEET; THENCE NORTH 12°08' EAST, 152.05 FEET; THENCE NORTH 77°52' WEST, 30.00 FEET; THENCE NORTH 12°08' EAST, 361.29 FEET; THENCE NORTH 65°29' WEST, 296.92 FEET TO THE CENTER LINE OF STATE HIGHWAY M-40; THENCE NORTH 12°08' EAST, ALONG SAID CENTERLINE, 428.88 FEET; THENCE ALONG SAID CENTERLINE ON A CURVE TO THE LEFT, 510.20 FEET TO A POINT 44.00 FEET SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE FROM THE NORTHERLY LINE OF THE MICHIGAN CENTRAL RAILROAD (NOW ABANDONED); THENCE SOUTHEASTERLY TO A POINT ON THE EAST LINE OF THE WEST HALF OF THE SOUTHWEST QUARTER OF SAID SECTION WHICH IS NORTH 0°39' WEST, 1455.50 FEET FROM THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF SAID WEST HALF; THENCE SOUTH 0°39' EAST ALONG SAID EAST LINE 1455.50 FEET TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.
61893 M 40, Jones, Michigan 49061
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period.
Dated: November 1, 2025
File No. 25-013121
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400
(11-01)(11-22)

OUTDOORS

Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

Photo provided / Diane Davidson

A male golden-crowned kinglet on Oct. 16 after hitting the window of United Federal Credit Union in St. Joseph.

Kinglet survives window strike

On Oct. 16, Diane Davidson of St. Joseph Township was walking into the United Federal Credit Union on State Street in St. Joseph when she noticed a little bird on the pavement. The bird was not moving due to striking the window of the building.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife

Davidson took a photo of the bird, a male golden-crowned kinglet, and submitted it for publication. Davidson also reported that a credit union employee, Rachel Thurman, helped the stunned bird by taking it off the sidewalk and placing it off in a bush. The kinglet soon recovered from the window strike and resumed its southward migration.

Golden-crowned kinglets are one of the smallest songbirds of Southwest Michigan, measuring about three-and-a-half inches in length. Both sexes are quite similar with an olive gray body, striped face and white wing bars. Males have a yellow or golden crown with a red-orange spot in the center. Females have only a golden crown and lack the red spot.

Golden-crowned kinglets are common in our region during the fall and spring migrations. The nesting range covers the coniferous forest belt in southern Alaska and Canada, south into the northern tier of contiguous states in the US.

In Michigan, the golden-crowned kinglet nests among the spruce and firs in the Upper Peninsula south into the northern Lower Peninsula.

During the 2010s, I found at least two male golden-crowned kinglets in a dense spruce-fir plantation in New Buffalo Township during June. I suspect that these males were paired with females on nests, but I was unable to confirm that nesting was taking place.

This record was likely the southernmost suspected nesting record of the species in Michigan. The only additional summer (June-July) record of the species in Berrien County was one reported during the summer of 1976 near Sawyer.

Golden-crowned kinglets are common in Southwest Michigan from late September through early to mid-November, during their trek southward to the southeast US where they winter. On average, the first fall migrant golden-crowned kinglet is seen in Berrien County by Sept. 20. Numbers taper off during November, but a few remain locally through the entire winter. They are often recorded on local Christmas Bird Count censuses.

There is a local increase in numbers of the species during the last ten days in March, signifying the northbound migration. Numbers peak in April and by the end of that month, most have passed through to Canada or northern Michigan. Occasionally golden-crowned kinglets are found locally until about May 20.

Brad Anderson of Bridgman photographed a partial albino dark-eyed junco on Oct. 24. Dark-eyed juncos are one of the most common songbirds in Southwest Michigan from October through April. Look for them below your bird feeders, as they mostly feed on the ground.

Anderson also photographed an adult bald eagle on Oct. 20 as it fed on roadkill along Date Road in Lake Township. Anderson noticed the eagle was missing part of its leg.

The most recent report I have of a ruby-throated hummingbird from Southwest Michigan was one photographed on Oct. 27 in Almena Township, Van Buren County by Derek Haroldson. The latest report from Berrien County was a bird that continued at the feeders of Brad and Hannah Anderson until Oct. 16. On average, the last reported fall date of a ruby-throated hummingbird in Southwest Michigan is around Oct. 20.

Any hummingbird sightings from late October onward should be reported to either myself or hummingbird bander Allen T. Chartier at amazilia3@gmail.com.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com

Photo provided / Brad Anderson

An adult bald eagle on Oct. 20 in Lake Township.

Photo provided / Brad Anderson

A partial albino dark-eyed junco on Oct. 24 in Bridgman.

Sarett Nature Center

Sarett Nature Stewards: 2-4 p.m. each Wednesday. This program is a way to experience Sarett in a whole different way. By being a nature steward you are helping Sarett but you also gain a sense of well-being. Sarett's crew will teach you many different skills such as collecting viable seeds for future planting, how to identify invasive species from native ones, removing invasive plants, and more. For ages 10 and older.

Jasper Pulaski Wildlife Refuge Trip: 2:30-8:30 p.m. Nov. 15. Join Sarett naturalists for an excursion to Indiana's Jasper Pulaski Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is well known for staging tens of thousands of sandhill cranes. Bring a sack supper as we will be staying until dark to watch the cranes fly in to spend the night. Meet at Sarett. Dress warmly. Cost is $15 for members, $20 for non-members. Call to register at (269) 927-4832.

Email info for Get Outdoors to sports@TheHP.com, or call 429-1294 by Monday.

Muskrats fight invasive cattails, help restore biodiversity in wetlands, study finds

By ADRIANA PÉREZ
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

With their surgical nibbles, these large, semi-aquatic, buck-toothed rodents have emerged as crucial helpers for ecologists restoring degraded wetlands across the Great Lakes.

They are not the well-known, dam-building beavers but can often be found in the same marshy ecosystems. Muskrats – which are more closely related to voles and hamsters – love to eat and build their lodges out of invasive cattails.

"One of the first things that happens is the cattail comes in, outcompetes the very diverse community of native plants," said Shane Lishawa, a researcher at Loyola University Chicago. "And that prevents not only plants, but the aquatic organisms – fish, invertebrates – and then also birds and amphibians from accessing and utilizing these wetlands that are super critical for biodiversity support across the whole region."

Typha angustifolia, or narrowleaf cattail, was introduced to North America in the dry ballast of European ships during the 19th century. Where it overlaps with the native broadleaf cattail, they produce a hybrid known as Typha x glauca. Lishawa called both the narrowleaf and hybrid cattails "very aggressive wetland invaders."

While beavers are known for their ability to drastically change their ecosystems, particularly by building dams that regulate water flow, muskrats can substantially alter vegetation structure. They do so by cutting invasive cattails underwater, removing a stem that serves as a snorkel for the plant, allowing it to transfer oxygen from the atmosphere into its roots.

In areas densely packed with tall cattails, muskrats create a "patchwork" of small openings that allow plants of different heights to grow. That, in turn, creates habitat for diverse native wildlife.

It is something Lishawa noticed after years of research in a freshwater marsh on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, when the local rodent population boomed as decadelong low water levels in the Great Lakes rebounded. The animals, he said, were very apparently "affecting the vegetation – and likely increasing the biodiversity of the site."

His team shared the observation with their local partners in the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. "And they were like, 'Yeah, of course, that's what muskrats do,'" Lishawa said.

The species holds cultural significance for the Great Lakes Ojibwe Nations, in whose creation stories the common muskrat – Wazhashk in the Indigenous language – plays an important role. Even though it dies in the process, Wazhashk helps restore the Earth after the Great Flood when it retrieves a "little ball of earth" that would later be shaped into Turtle Island, now known as North America.

Equipped with this ecological wisdom, researchers from Loyola, the tribe and the University of Connecticut gathered data and found that muskrats reduced invasive hybrid cattails by 71 percent where the animals were present in the marsh that connects the Munuscong River with the St. Marys River, located between lakes Superior and Huron.

The removal of the tall plants also reduced the cover of European frogbit, another nonnative plant with floating leaves that Lishawa said likes to grow "in and amongst the cattails."

"In (the creation) story, Wazhashk's contribution and sacrifice allowed for others to have a place to live," the study authors wrote. "(It) illustrates the important role that muskrats play in modifying their environment and providing habitat for other organisms."

Because muskrats are not present in all wetlands, especially given their population decline in the United States over the last few decades, the researchers also tried to replicate the rodents' impact on cattails by mowing the plants below the waterline.

"There might be circumstances," Lishawa said, "where you would like to see the effects of this organism, but you don't have them there to work with. So, we wanted to see if we could create conditions that reflected what the muskrats did."

They found that a human management strategy that mimicked the rodent's cutting method could have a similar effect in reducing the invasive plant's cover where a muskrat population is not present.

"This is something that I, personally, would like to explore a lot more. I mean, as far as I know, we're the only people who have ever really tried doing this," Lishawa said.

Replicating beaver dams has been more widely used in ecosystem restoration, and he hopes mimicking muskrat activity leads to similar success.

"Across North America, there's been this awakening about the ecological role of beavers," Lishawa said. "I think that there's a parallel there with muskrats."

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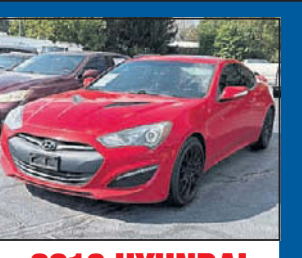

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